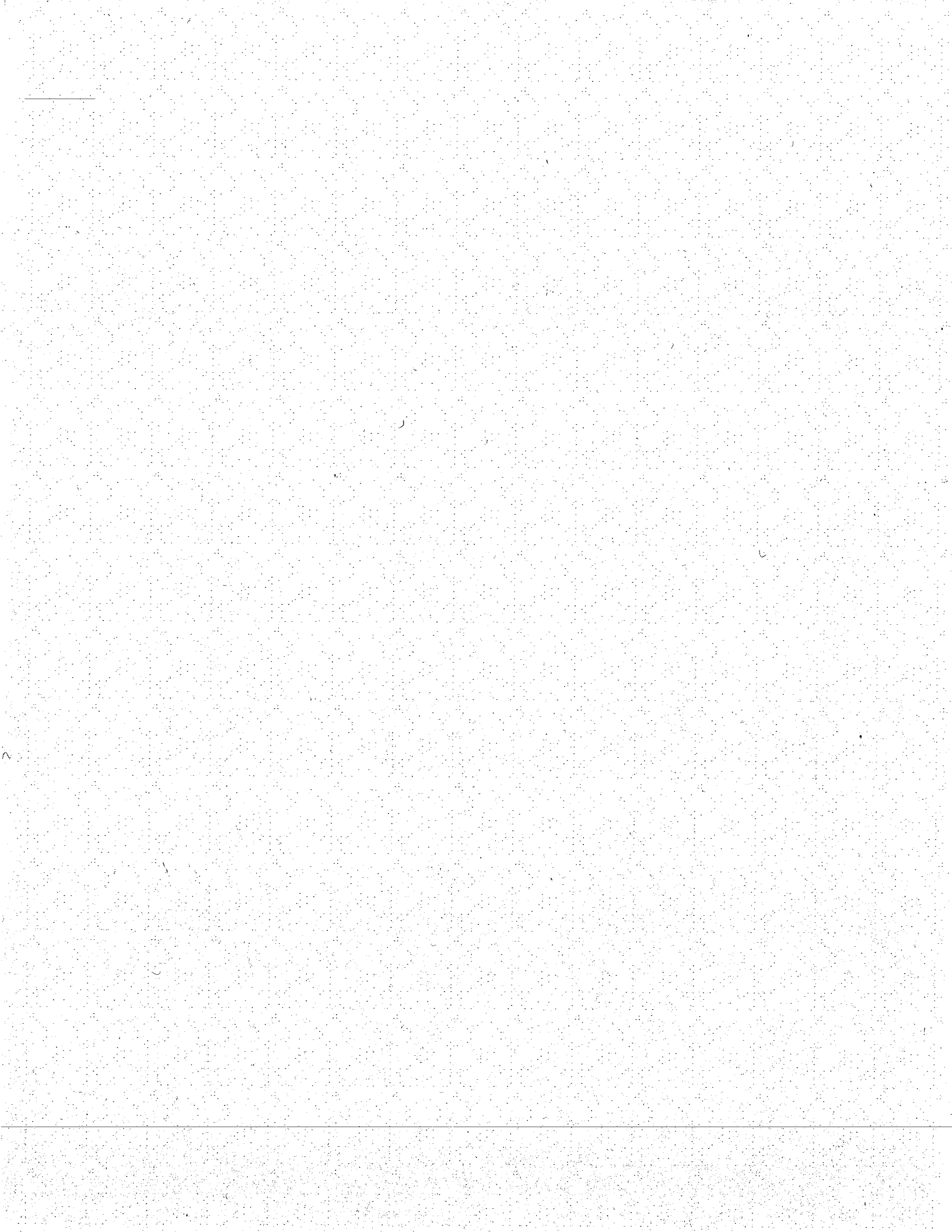




**New York Yankees Clips**  
**Sunday, May 27, 2012**



## BASEBALL

# That Sound Is a Healthier Teixeira, Delivering One Hit After Another

By DAVID WALDSTEIN

OAKLAND, Calif. — There is an evolving mathematical ratio, in inverse proportion, that is helping the Yankees win baseball games lately. The less Mark Teixeira coughs, the more he hits.

Teixeira had had a severe cough and blocked air passages since April 12 and it was so debilitating at times that he had trouble breathing. It limited his time in the weight room and the batting cage, and sapped him of his signature power.

But over the last few days the symptoms, the result of severe bronchial congestion, began to dissipate, and his production, at the plate has soared.

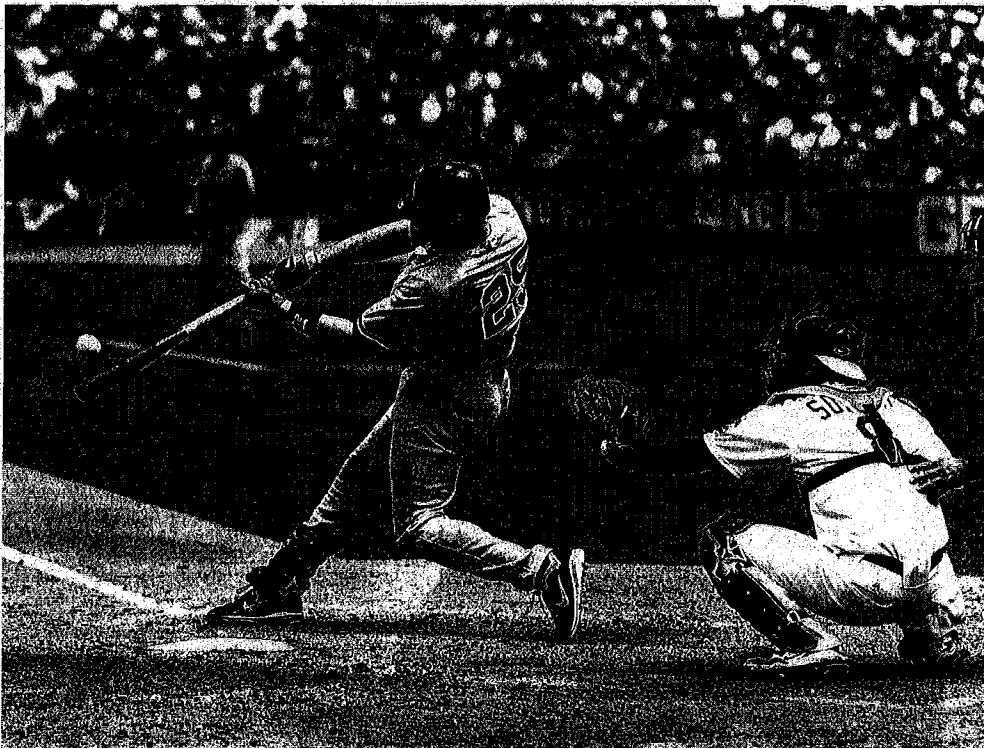
On Friday, he hit his first home run since May 14 and on Saturday the only wheezing was done by the Oakland Athletics pitchers, who coughed up three home runs for the second straight game, two of which came from the resurgent Teixeira.

Teixeira went 4 for 5 with two home runs and five runs batted in as the Yankees pounded on their former teammate Bartolo Colon and the Athletics, 9-2.

Teixeira hit a solo homer in the fourth inning and a two-run blast to center in the ninth, and also knocked in two runs with a single in the fifth to raise his batting average to an almost respectable .248.

But after the game Teixeira, buoyed by his reawakening power, said he was not so concerned with his batting average, which has sagged over the last three seasons. Home runs, he noted, are more important than average-enhancing singles. At least they are more fun.

"Whether it's a solo shot or a grand slam, it's instant offense," Teixeira said. "It makes your team feel good, it pumps everybody up. Chicks dig the long ball, fans dig the long ball. Yeah, I said it. It's fun hitting home runs be-



Mark Teixeira hitting a home run in the fourth inning Saturday at Oakland. He had three more hits and five runs batted in.

cause not everyone can do it." Robinson Cano certainly can. He hit a solo blast to right field in the second inning, joining Teixeira with home runs in consecutive games with his seventh of the season.

C. C. Sabathia, pitching in front of 200 friends and family members from his nearby hometown, Vallejo, made the offense stand up with seven solid innings and improved to 6-2.

The victory was the fourth in a row for the Yankees, tying their season high, and their eighth consecutive victory at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum.

"Good day, big win," said Teixeira, who has eight homers. "No matter what you do personally, continuing this little streak we're on, we needed it."

His five runs batted in were the most he has had since he had six against Boston on April 21, which

was the only other game in which he hit two home runs. It was also the first time this season that he has hit home runs in consecutive games.

With the Athletics using the infield shift that has become so fashionable against him, Teixeira hit two balls over it, and two more through it. Oakland actually was not fully committed to the shift in the fifth, leaving the shortstop slightly to the left of

second base, and Teixeira hit the ball up the middle to score Derek Jeter and Cano as the Yankees took a 6-2 lead.

Although his diminishing cough seems to be a big reason for Teixeira's improved offense, there is a coinciding factor of equal importance. During the three days off Teixeira was given last week to rest and recuperate, he spent time evaluating how he got into such a confounding

slump.

"I was struggling, physically," he said, "taking the days off, getting a little bit of energy back, and then kind of assessing. O.K., let's wipe the slate clean and what do we need to do to get back to being me."

He came to the conclusion that he had been too accommodating to those who suggested he should improve his batting average by trying to use the whole field, people Teixeira declined to name.

"I tried to make everybody happy," he said.

It didn't work, and as his average dipped, so did his power. Earlier in the week, Teixeira abandoned that approach, with the approval of Manager Joe Girardi and the hitting instructor Kevin Long. Now he is looking to channel his inner slugger again, the one that helped him earn an eight-year, \$180 million contract, even if it makes him a little pull-happy.

Teixeira came into the season with a .281 career batting average, but has seen a decline over his last two seasons, batting .256 in 2010 and .248 last year. He carried a .231 average into Saturday's game, but raised it 17 points with the four hits.

"I don't know," he said, "maybe I'm not as good as I used to be. But I know 30-plus homers and 100 R.B.I.'s is what I expect every year and what I continue to expect my entire year. Average? We'll see what happens."

## INSIDE PITCH

DEREK JETER collected two hits and passed PAUL WANER for 15th place on the career hit list, tying GEORGE BRETT with 3,154. He was also hit with a high pitch in the back of his left shoulder, but remained in the game. . . . C. C. Sabathia improved to 8-8 against the Athletics, leaving only three teams with winning records against him, the Boston Red Sox, the Los Angeles Angels and the Yankees.

# YANKS SEND TEX

## Mark's 2 homers lead Bombers to 4th straight win

By GEORGE A. KING III

YANKS 9  
ATHLETICS 2 **Boxscore**  
Page 64

OAKLAND — The man who took the most blame for the Yankees' recent production outage is the one leading the effort back to respectability, now that he has junked an offseason plan that was designed to raise his batting average.

"I respected the people who asked and you listen," Teixeira said of the approach he took in spring training and, for most of the first two months of the season. "I tried to do it and it didn't work. My whole career I have been a certain hitter and it worked out well. I tried to make everybody happy."

**NYPOST.COM**  
George A. King III  
has all your inside  
Yankees info.  
See it at [nypost.com](http://nypost.com).

Teixeira made the entire Yankees' universe smile yesterday when he led the Yankees to a 9-2 spanking of the Triple-A's in front of 27,112 at the Coliseum.

Teixeira went 4-for-5, homered twice and drove in five runs. It was the second straight game in which he homered, and he is 8-for-19 in the past five games.

Though he didn't mention who wanted him to try and improve on a career-low .248 average from last year, manager Joe Girardi always has been firm in that given the choice between Teixeira hitting for a higher average or getting 35 homers and 110 RBIs, he will take the production.

It wasn't hitting coach Kevin Long's idea, and general manager Brian Cashman said it wasn't suggested by him.

"It doesn't matter," Teixeira said. "Kevin always talks about staying positive and be who you are and take your 'A' swing."

The Yankees' fourth straight

win tied a season high and went to CC Sabathia. After a rough four innings in which he gave up two runs and six hits, the Yankees' ace blanked the A's across the next three innings and improved to 6-2 by stopping a two-game losing streak.

Teixeira homered with one out and the bases empty in the fourth off Bartolo Colon, collected a two-out, two-run single off his former teammate the next inning, beat the shift with a single and hit a two-run homer to center field in the ninth.

Bothered by a deep bronchial problem that produced a violent cough since the beginning of the season, Teixeira's energy level improved following three days off last week.

"Now, the pop has returned. "I am glad to see results," Teixeira said of his new approach, which focuses on being more aggressive instead of attempting to serve soft singles to left. "I am trying to let it go which I have been doing my whole career."

Teixeira had help from middle-of-the-order mates. Robinson Cano went 3-for-5 and homered. Alex Rodriguez went 0-for-3 but drove in a run.

The Yankees have hit nine homers in the past three games, which makes life easier for everybody.

A notorious streak hitter, Teixeira knows this mini tear won't last forever. But he also understands what made him one of the most feared hitters in baseball and why the Yankees dropped \$180 million in his lap.

"You can always tinker with things," Teixeira said. "I am who I am. I wouldn't know how to explain the type of hitter I am."

Yesterday, he was a hitter who inflicted deep damage, the hitter the Yankees need not only to hit for average but power.

[george.king@nypost.com](mailto:george.king@nypost.com)



**BREAKING OUT:** Mark Teixeira, who went 4-for-5 with two home runs and five RBIs, watches his second home run leave the field during the Yankees' 9-2 victory over the A's yesterday. EPA

### ON DECK AT ATHLETICS

TODAY — 4:05, YES  
AND WCBS (880 AM)

RHP Hiroki Kuroda  
(3-0, 4.56) vs.  
LHP Tommy Milone  
(6-3, 3.75)

Tomorrow begins a three-game series at the Angels.

#### INSIDE THE MATCHUPS

**YANKS:** Kuroda has made nine starts this season, receiving a decision in all of them. In his last four losses, the Yankees have scored a total of just two runs. He has yet to get a victory away from Yankee Stadium, going 0-4 with a 6.23 ERA on the road. Kuroda has made only one career start against the Athletics, and is 0-1.

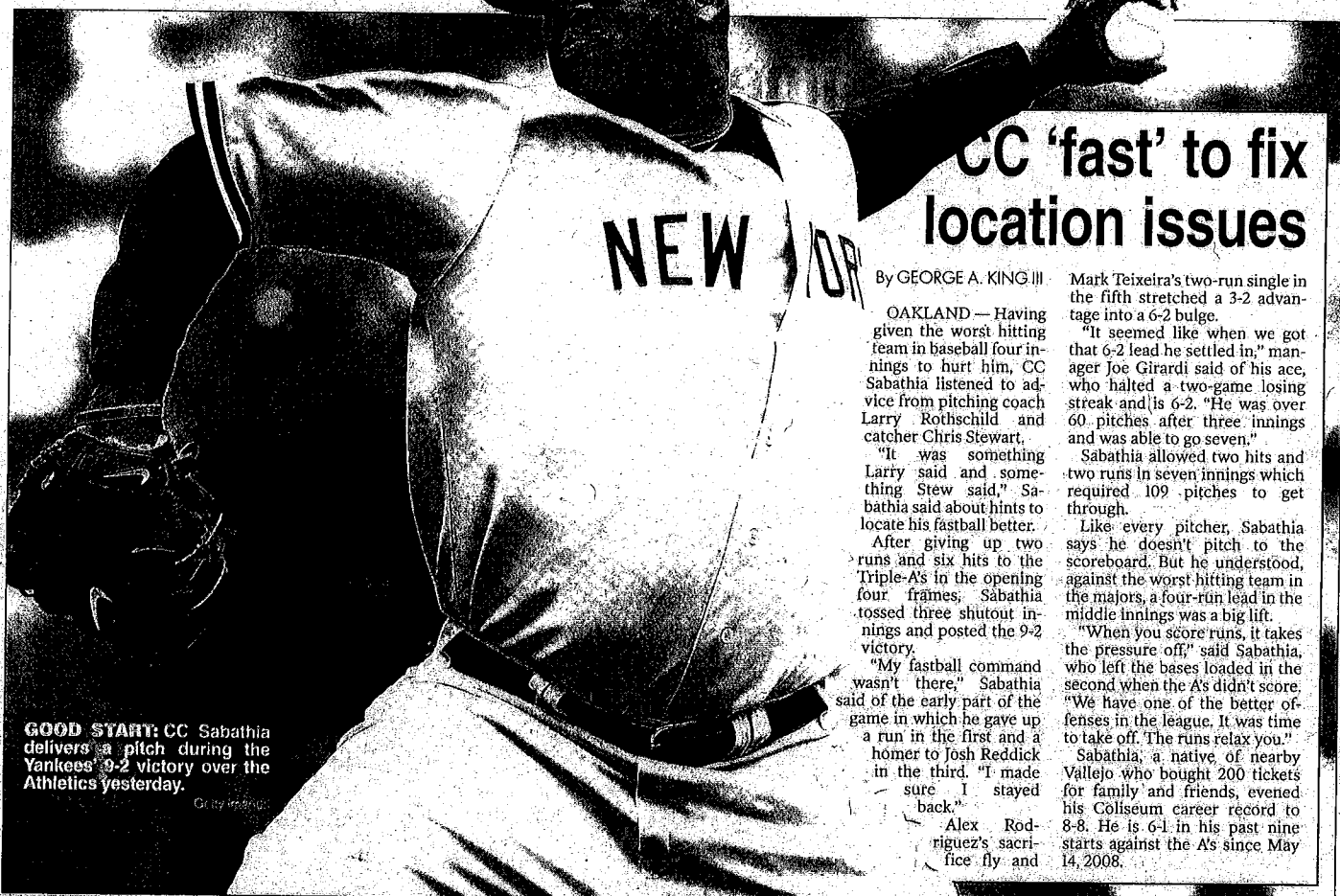
**ATHLETICS:** Milone's last start was a seven-inning one-run masterpiece in a 2-1 win over the Angels. He has won three of his past four starts, and pitches exceptionally well at home, going 4-0 in four starts with a 0.60 ERA. Milone has never faced the Yankees.

#### STAT SO?

**YANKS:** After yesterday's 9-2 victory, the Yankees have won their past seven games at Oakland and owned a 22-9 record there since 2004.

**ATHLETICS:** Outfielder Josh Reddick is batting just .265 (22-for-83) in May, but has nine home runs (including one yesterday) and 17 RBIs in the month.

# MESSAGE TO A'S



## CC 'fast' to fix location issues

By GEORGE A. KING III

OAKLAND — Having given the worst hitting team in baseball four innings to hurt him, CC Sabathia listened to advice from pitching coach Larry Rothschild and catcher Chris Stewart.

"It was something Larry said and something Stew said," Sabathia said about hints to locate his fastball better.

After giving up two runs and six hits to the Triple-A's in the opening four frames, Sabathia tossed three shutout innings and posted the 9-2 victory.

"My fastball command wasn't there," Sabathia said of the early part of the game in which he gave up a run in the first and a homer to Josh Reddick in the third. "I made sure I stayed back."

Alex Rodriguez's sacrifice fly and

Mark Teixeira's two-run single in the fifth stretched a 3-2 advantage into a 6-2 bulge.

"It seemed like when we got that 6-2 lead he settled in," manager Joe Girardi said of his ace, who halted a two-game losing streak and is 6-2. "He was over 60 pitches after three innings and was able to go seven."

Sabathia allowed two hits and two runs in seven innings which required 109 pitches to get through.

Like every pitcher, Sabathia says he doesn't pitch to the scoreboard. But he understood, against the worst hitting team in the majors, a four-run lead in the middle innings was a big lift.

"When you score runs, it takes the pressure off," said Sabathia, who left the bases loaded in the second when the A's didn't score. "We have one of the better offenses in the league. It was time to take off. The runs relax you."

Sabathia, a native of nearby Vallejo who bought 200 tickets for family and friends, evened his Coliseum career record to 8-8. He is 6-1 in his past nine starts against the A's since May 14, 2008.

**GOOD START:** CC Sabathia delivers a pitch during the Yankees' 9-2 victory over the Athletics yesterday.

By GEORGE A. KING III

## Ibanez on field more than expected after Gardner injury

By GEORGE A. KING III

OAKLAND — When the Yankees signed Raul Ibanez, they believed he would be the designated hitter and possibly play a little in the outfield.

Yet, because of Brett Gardner's strained right elbow that has him out since April 17, manager Joe Girardi has been forced to use Ibanez more in the field than originally planned.

"I thought he was going to be the DH against righties all the time," Girardi said of Ibanez. "I didn't think Gardy was going to be

out a month."

Ibanez was in left field for the 17th time yesterday against former Yankee Bartolo Colon. He also started six games in right. And though that may have been more than the original plan, Girardi saw the shape the soon-to-be 40-year-old and the way he played the outfield during spring training and wasn't concerned if he asked Ibanez to play more outfield.

"When I saw him in spring training and the way he was moving," Girardi said of Ibanez who went 0-for-5 in a 9-2 victory. "In my mind I had him playing the

### YANKEES NOTES

outfield once a week, maybe twice a week, three times in two weeks to give some guys a blow."

➤ Girardi was more concerned with Derek Jeter rolling his left wrist making a diving stop in the hole in the second than getting hit high and in the back of the left arm in the eighth inning.

"I was concerned," said Girardi, who was almost out of the dugout to check on the shortstop. "But Robby [Cano] waived us off."

Jeter went 2-for-4 and tied George Brett for 14th place on the all-time hit list with 3,154.

➤ Girardi said he isn't concerned a second setback to Brett Gardner's strained right elbow could end the left fielder's season but he is worried that another problem might keep Gardner out until after the All-Star break (July 9-12).

"I have a concern a little bit about that. The whole season? No," Girardi said. "If we have another setback you are probably looking at the All-Star break. You have to make sure that when you go out and

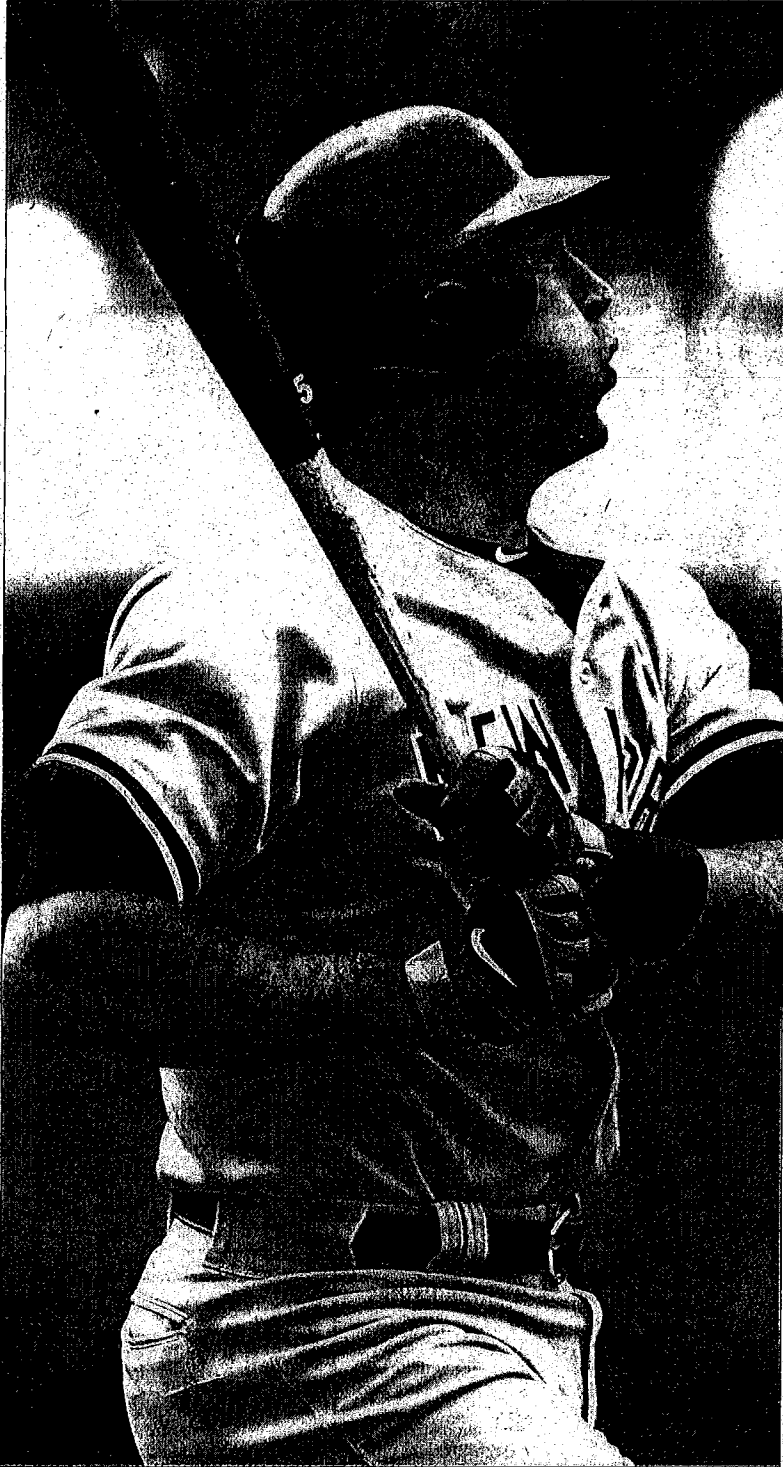
play some [minor league] games you don't feel it at all. No pressure, not a little bit of swelling, nothing."

Gardner will swing a bat tomorrow in Tampa, and that will tell the Yankees what the next step is.

➤ According to Girardi, Ivan Nova didn't show any signs that a right hamstring problem he battled last week worsened after Nova pitched Friday night. ... David Robertson will throw tomorrow in Tampa and likely will need several minor league rehab games before coming off the disabled list.

BASEBALL

# TEIXEIRA SHOWS



## Cranks 2 more HRs

BY MARK FEINSAND  
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

OAKLAND — You can't stop a home run with an infield shift. Mark Teixeira reiterated that once again on Saturday, hitting a pair of homers to lead the Yankees to a 9-2 win over the A's at the Coliseum.

Teixeira went 4-for-5 and drove in five runs, two of them capping a three-run fifth inning that helped give CC Sabathia some breathing room. The formerly slumping first baseman has three homers and seven RBI in the first two games of the series.

"When you can hit a home run, it's instant offense," Teixeira said. "It makes your team feel good, it pumps everybody up, whether it's a solo shot or a grand slam. Chicks dig the longball. Fans dig the longball. Yeah, I said it. It's fun hitting home runs because not everyone can do it."

Teixeira hadn't been doing much home run-hitting through his first 41 games, working on hitting the ball to all fields in an effort to raise his sickly batting average. Earlier this week, Teixeira said he would go back to his old approach at the plate, abandoning his plan to beat the infield shifts most teams employ against him.

Through Teixeira's first two games in Oakland, his modified

approach seems to be working.

"I told you guys a couple of days ago what I was going to do, and I've been doing it," Teixeira said. "I'm glad I'm seeing some results, because then you'd probably be asking me what's my next plan."

Though Teixeira's resurgence has garnered most of the attention, Robinson Cano continued to swing a hot bat Saturday. Cano went 3-for-5 with a home run, his third in the last four games.

YANKEES	9
A'S	2

"You want your big guys to do a lot of damage and they've done that," Joe Girardi said. "And it just also means the other guys are getting on base. I thought our guys did a good job of moving some runners over and taking what the other club was giving them."

Sabathia was the beneficiary of the run support, snapping a two-game personal losing streak with seven innings of two-run ball. Sabathia (6-2) allowed seven hits and walked two, striking out four.

The win was the fourth in a row for the Yankees, matching their longest streak of the season, and their eighth straight in Oakland. Derek Jeter went 2-for-4 with two RBI, tying George Brett for 14th place on the all-time hits list with 3,154.

The A's took a lead with a run in the first, but Cano tied it with a homer in the second against former Yankee Bartolo Colon. Jeter

## CC homecoming

OAKLAND — Nearly 200 friends and family members were sitting in right field as CC Sabathia took the mound against the A's Saturday, but for the first few innings, it didn't look like the big lefty would give them a performance to remember.

Sabathia overcame some early struggles, delivering seven innings of two-run ball in the Yankees' 9-2 win over the A's. "It always feels good to be able to come home and pitch in front of the family," said Sabathia, who is from nearby Vallejo. "We bought 200 tickets today. It was a lot of people."

In the first inning, then loaded the bases with two outs in the second. Sabathia escaped the jam when Derek Jeter made a nice play on a Coco Crisp grounder, but Josh Reddick led off the third with a home run, tying the game at 2.

"Early in the game, everything was cutting back over the plate and I gave up some hits," Sabathia said. "I was able to get it back later in the game."

Sabathia settled down after Reddick's homer, retiring 12 of the next 14 batters. The A's wouldn't advance another runner beyond first base against Sabathia (6-2). "I didn't think he had command of the down and away early on," Joe Girardi said. "He found it and

Mark Teixeira follows flight of second homer of game against Oakland as Yankee slugger appears to have shaken season-long slump. Photo by EPA

★

# A'S POWER SHIFT

## to leave Mark on Oakland as Yankees' streak hits 4



### HAVING A BLAST

After Saturday's 4-for-5, two-homer game, Mark Teixeira appears to be regaining his old form. His average has risen from .231 to .248 in the last 10 games. Teixeira's numbers in games from May 14 through Saturday:

Games	10
Hits	12
At-bats	35
Avg	.343
HR	4
RBI	11
Walks	5

added an RBI single in the third to give the Yankees a lead, but Josh Reddick answered with a shot off Sabathia in the bottom half to tie it up again.

After hitting a double and a homer in Friday's win, Teixeira snapped the tie in the fourth with a line-drive homer to right field, his seventh of the season.

Alex Rodriguez added a sac fly in the fifth, then after Cano's double put runners at second and third with two out, Teixeira lined a single to right field

against Colon, scoring Jeter and Cano to push the lead to 6-2.

Teixeira, who would add a two-run homer in the ninth to put an exclamation point on his afternoon, now has 28 RBI, trailing Nick Swisher by only one for the team lead. His four-hit day not only matched a career-high, but it also lifted his average from .231 to .248.

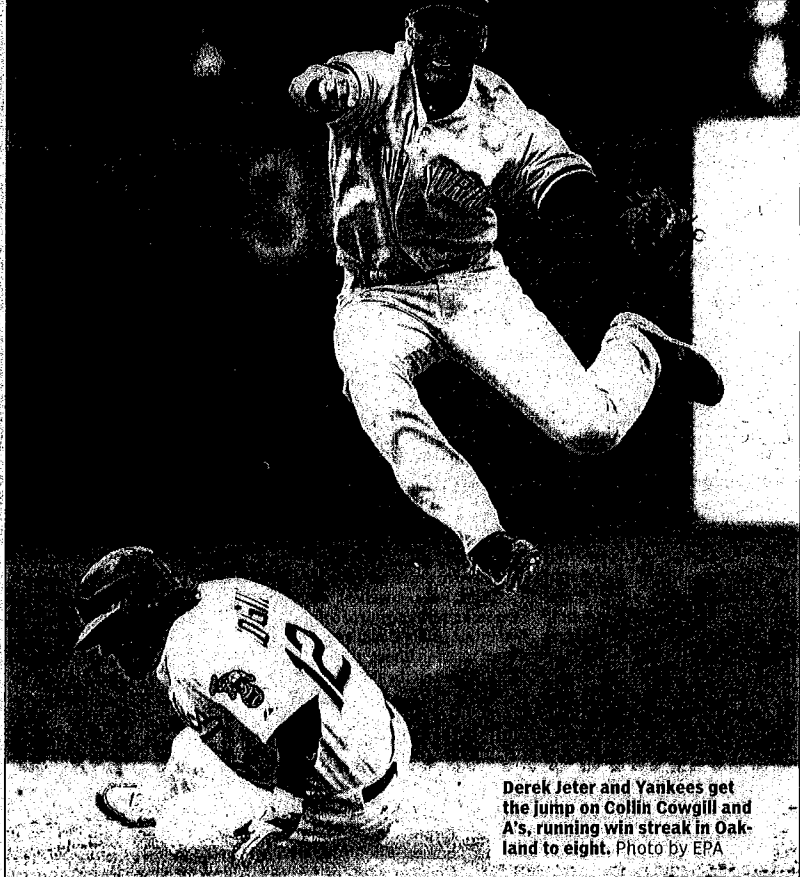
"If you ask anybody, would you rather take the higher average or 30 (homers) and 100 (RBI), you'd take 30 and 100 every time," Teixeira said. "It takes three singles to get a run in. It takes one home run. We have to score runs. No one cares what our average is. Everyone cares how many runs we score, how many games we win."

Teixeira hinted that the decision to change things up in order to raise his average was not necessarily his idea, although he declined to say who asked him to change his approach.

"Enough people tell you to try to do things, and you do them," Teixeira said. "You respect what people ask you to do, but it just didn't work. The fact of the matter is, it didn't work."

Instead, Teixeira returned to the approach he used for the first nine years of his career, when he averaged 35 home runs and 113 RBI per season.

"My whole career, I've been a certain kind of hitter and it's worked out pretty well," Teixeira said. "Hopefully it will continue to work out this year."



Derek Jeter and Yankees get the jump on Collin Cowgill and A's, running win streak in Oakland to eight. Photo by EPA

## delivers as family affair



that's when he sailed through."

### FAST TRACK?

Brett Gardner (right elbow) is slated to swing a bat for the first time since May 10, and if all goes well, Girardi doesn't think it will be long before the left fielder returns from the disabled list. "He got a couple games in, and then he sat again," Girardi said, referring to Gardner's two Triple-A rehab games May 9-10. "Will it take a little longer than the last time, maybe, but I don't think too

long."

Another setback could keep him out for several more weeks, so the Yankees could opt to take their time before turning him loose on a rehab assignment.

"If we have another setback, we're probably looking at the All-Star break," Girardi said. "So we've got to make sure, before you go out and play some games, that you don't feel it at all. So we've got to make sure there's nothing, no pressure, not a little bit of swelling, nothing."

### YANKEE, GO HOME

Back in 2002, Eric Chavez was asked what he expected the fan reaction to be when Jason Giambi made his initial return

to Oakland after leaving the A's to sign in the Bronx.

"I said, 'Well, he's playing for the Yankees,'" Chavez recalled. "They should boo him."

Ten years later, it was Chavez making his first appearance at the Coliseum wearing a New York uniform. His departure wasn't the same as that of Giambi, who left the A's for a \$120 million contract, but his reception Friday night was surprisingly similar. "I wrote the manual," Chavez joked. Hiroki Kuroda (3-6) takes the mound for Yankees today in his first outing against Oakland since June 17, 2009, with the Dodgers. He is trying for his first road win after an 0-4 start.

## EXTRA INNINGS

### STAT OF THE DAY

# 4-4

The Yankees will face Tommy Milone on Sunday, the first time they've seen the lefthander. The Bombers are 4-4 this season against starters they have never faced.

nine hits in six innings

### TEST YOUR YANKEES IQ

Robinson Cano hit his 150th career home run on Friday. Who are the other two Yankees second baseman to reach that plateau?

### UNSUNG HERO

Derek Jeter tied George Brett for 14th place on the all-time hits list with 3,154. Up next: Cal Ripken Jr. at 3,184.

### NEXT GAME

Today, 4:00, at A's; Hiroki Kuroda (3-6, 4.56) vs. Tommy Milone (6-3, 3.75) TV: YES

### MIA

Bartolo Colon came up empty against his former team, allowing six runs on

(EST) 10P, 10:30P, 8P

PHOTO BY EPA/OUTLINE; TEIXEIRA: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS; JETER: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

# Tex really getting



Past his cough, he hits two HRs to power Yankees

BY ERIK BOLAND  
erik.boland@newsday.com

OAKLAND, Calif. — Yes, he's done this against the not-very-good A's. But given how the first 1½ months of the season went for Mark Teixeira, he'll take it. Because in that period, he wasn't doing it against many teams — good, bad or indifferent.

Teixeira, who seems to be getting over the hacking cough that's plagued him for nearly seven weeks, homered twice and had five RBIs yesterday as the Yankees beat the A's, 9-2, for their fourth straight win.

Teixeira, who also homered Friday, went 4-for-5. He raised his RBI total to 28, second on the team, and has eight home runs. "I feel good," he said. "Just being real aggressive. I told you guys a couple days ago I was going to do it, and I've been doing it. I'm glad I'm seeing some results. Trying to let it go, which I've done my whole career."

Teixeira said his plan to raise his batting average from the left side by trying to hit more balls the other way — which he discussed several times in the offseason — essentially has been scrapped.

"I tried. It didn't work," he said. "My whole career, I've been a certain kind of hitter and it's worked out pretty well. Hopefully it will continue."

Teixeira doesn't think, he was becoming a slap hitter, but the concern about bringing his average up, he said, had him straying from the "just hit the ball hard" approach that made him a 30-homer, 100-RBI player for eight straight seasons.

"I'm here to drive in runs, play great defense and win games, win games first," he said. "At the end of the day, you have to score runs; it doesn't matter what your batting average is. I tried to make everybody happy."

CC Sabathia (6-2, 3.66), who is from nearby Vallejo, made the 200-plus friends, family and acquaintances he had in attendance happy, allowing two runs and seven hits in seven innings.



# Yankees hacks now

The Yankees (25-21) pounded a teammate from last season, Bartolo Colon (4-5), who allowed six runs and nine hits in six innings. Robinson Cano had three hits, including his seventh home run of the season. He has three homers in his last four games.

"We know he's going to throw a lot of fastballs," Cano said of Colon. "You don't want to miss your pitch when he throws one over the plate."

The Yankees didn't miss many. They had 14 hits after recording 12 Friday night and now have nine homers in their last three games. Derek Jeter, Nick Swisher and Eric Chavez each had two hits, with Jeter's giving him 3,154 for his career. That sent him past Paul Waner (3,152) and into a tie with George Brett for 14th on the all-time list. Next up is Cal Ripken Jr. at 3,184.

"I've said all along that these guys haven't been great hitters for a while by accident," Joe Girardi said of his lineup, which

SCORECARD

YANKEES 9 : 2 ATHLETICS

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

was in a prolonged slump much of the month. "These guys have been doing it year after year after year, and eventually things are going to even out."

Teixeira received plenty of the early-season criticism. His

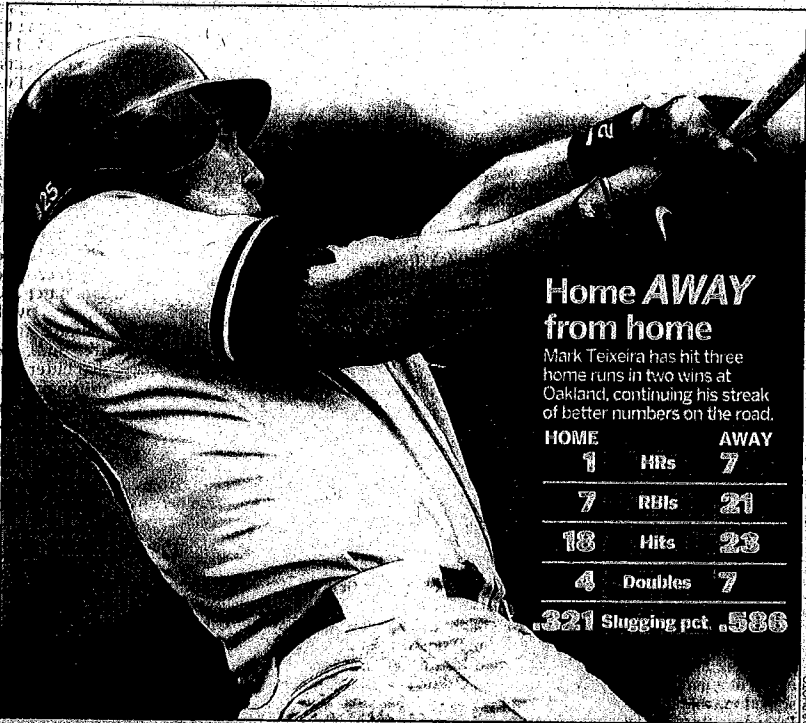
difficulties were exacerbated by a lingering cough — one Girardi characterized yesterday as "violent" — that he picked up the second week of April. But a couple of days off and a new approach — which actually was his old approach — has him feeling renewed.

He said the off days let him "wipe the slate clean" and, along with hitting coach Kevin Long, assess "what do I need to do to get back to being me."

"Chicks dig the long ball, the fans dig the long ball," Teixeira said with a smile at his mention of an ad campaign from years ago. "It's fun hitting home runs because not everyone can do it."



**NOW ONLINE**  
Can A-Rod catch Willie Mays' 660 career homers this season? Find out at [newsday.com/obp](http://newsday.com/obp)



## Home AWAY from home

Mark Teixeira has hit three home runs in two wins at Oakland, continuing his streak of better numbers on the road.

HOME		AWAY
1	HRs	7
7	RBIs	21
18	Hits	23
4	Doubles	7
.321 Slugging pct.		.586

Mark Teixeira hits two-run homer in ninth inning to give him four hits and five RBIs for the day.



CC Sabathia got it together after third and earned his sixth win.

## CC gives his fans good experience

BY ART SPANDER  
Special to Newsday

OAKLAND, Calif. — It wasn't as if the whole city was here. Vallejo's population is about 116,000. But CC Sabathia had purchased enough tickets — 200 for family and friends from his hometown, a half-hour northeast of O.co Coliseum — to fill an area of the rightfield stands.

His own rooting section, if you will, and once Sabathia was able to control his pitches yesterday, he gave them a show and helped the Yankees earn a 9-2 victory over the A's.

"It seemed like when we got the lead to 6-2," Joe Girardi said, referring to the fifth inning, "CC really settled in. He was over 60 [pitches] in three innings, and we were able to get seven innings out of him."

Seven innings and 109 pitches.

Sabathia, who had lost his previous two starts after winning five straight decisions, gave up two runs and five hits in those first three innings.

"His control?" Girardi said. "Sometimes it just happens. You're always searching for reasons. He was cutting the ball a little bit early. He didn't have control of the down-and-away pitch. Then he found it."

"But he was getting ground balls. That was the important

thing. And [Derek] Jeter got to them. That's what you have to do, pick each other up."

Sabathia said pitching coach Larry Rothschild and catcher Chris Stewart reminded him to "get on top of the ball" at the release point. Eventually he followed instructions.

"I try not to pitch differently in any game," he said, "but when we got the runs, it took the pressure off. We have one of the best offenses in the league. It definitely relaxes you when you get some runs."

Mark Teixeira homered in the fourth for a 3-2 lead, singled home two runs in the fifth to put the Yankees ahead 6-2 and added a two-run homer in the ninth.

The defense wasn't bad, either. Jeter's pickup of Coco Crisp's grounder behind second base with the bases loaded in the second was the sort of saving play he's made through his career.

"That's what you have to do," Girardi said. "Sometimes you have to pick each other up. CC got ground balls, and Jeter got to them."

Sabathia allowed nine walks in his previous two starts, but on an afternoon by the bay as gray as the Yankees' road uniforms, he walked only two, none after the third. His 61 walks in 137 1/3 innings last nine starts against the A's.

# Teixeira tears up Oakland

Yanks get win behind  
his two HRs, five RBI

By Chad Jennings  
cjennings@lohud.com

OAKLAND — Three days off were meant to clear Mark Teixeira's throat. Instead, they cleared his head and breathed new life into his bat.

Ever since he sat last weekend, the Yankees' first baseman has been a new hitter. Which is to say, he's been the hitter he used to be. His four hits, two home runs and five RBI on Saturday helped carry the Yankees to their fourth straight win, a 9-2 blow-out against the Athletics that continued the team's sudden offensive resurgence.

"I was struggling, physically," Teixeira said. "So taking the days off, getting a little bit of energy back, feeling a little better, and then just assessing — let's wipe the slate clean. What do I need to do to get back to being me?"

Truth is, Teixeira's been dealing with more than a persistent cough this season. He's been dealing with high expectations, disappointing numbers, and a frustrating attempt to improve his batting average while maintaining his power.

During spring training, Teixeira said he wanted to go the other way more often. He even talked about occasionally bunting to beat a defensive shift that's been effective. Not only did Teixeira's average drop even lower, his power numbers also suffered.

Manager Joe Girardi gave him last weekend off, and Teixeira came to a decision.

"You can always try to change things, you can try to tinker with things, but I am who I am," he said. "... I'm here to drive in runs and play great defense and win games. Win games first. At the end of the day, you've got to score runs. It doesn't matter what your batting average is."

Teixeira's new approach is the same as his old approach, the one that made him one of the best all-around hitters in baseball for six straight seasons: Swing hard, drive the ball and don't try to aim it toward the holes in the defense.

See YANKEES, Page 5C

## YANKEES BLOG

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

Journal News 5/27/12

## YANKEES: Beat Athletics for fourth straight win

Continued from Page 1C

In six games since stepping back into the lineup, Teixeira has eight hits, three home runs, two doubles and eight RBI.

"Sometimes it can be too far away from what you really do," Girardi said. "He's been a guy

that's pulled a lot in his career. ... That's who he is, that's part of his DNA, and that's what he probably needs to do."

Teixeira's first home run gave the Yankees a 3-2 lead in the fourth inning, and their suddenly potent offense took off from there. While starter CC

Sabathia settled in for his sixth win of the season, Teixeira had a two-run double in the fifth and a two-run homer in the ninth.

Robinson Cano had three hits, including a home run of his own, to be one of five Yankees with more than one hit in the

game. Four wins matches the Yankees' longest winning streak of the season, and they've scored at least six runs in three straight games for the first time since April 21.

"I told you guys a couple of days ago what I was going to do, and I've been doing it," Teixeira said.

"I'm glad I'm seeing some results, because (if not) then you'd probably be asking me, what's my next plan? Just being real aggressive with my swings, trying to let it go, which I've done my whole career."

# **THE WALL STREET JOURNAL**

WSJ.com

Updated May 26, 2012, 8:16 p.m. ET

Teixeira delivers big hits again as Yankees win

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Josh Reddick is providing the power stroke the Oakland Athletics are missing without Brandon Inge and Yoenis Cespedes in the middle of the order.

Problem is, he's the only one. The A's need reinforcements — and they could be coming soon.

Reddick hit a solo home run in a 9-2 loss to the New York Yankees on Saturday, the fourth straight defeat for the undermanned A's.

"I'm happy I'm swinging the bat but unfortunately we're not winning games," Reddick said. "We have a team full of power and they know we'll turn it around. I know we'll turn it around."

Mark Teixeira hit a two-run homer and a solo shot among his career high-tying four hits to back CC Sabathia's sixth win of the year in the Yankees' fourth straight win to match a season high.

In two games here, Teixeira has three home runs and seven RBIs.

"I'm glad I'm seeing some results. Just being real aggressive with my swings and trying to let it go, which I've done my whole career," said Teixeira, whose five RBIs were a career high. "I am who I am. I wouldn't know how to explain what kind of hitter I am. I just go up and try to see the ball and hit it really hard."

Teixeira and Robinson Cano each homered for a second straight day as the Yankees added three more longballs to give them nine homers in the last three games.

What a change for Teixeira, whose lingering cough and physical limitations kept him from clearing the fences early on even when he felt he was swinging as hard as he could.

Teixeira hit a solo home run in the fourth, added a two-run single in the fifth when New York broke it open and had a two-run homer in the ninth, almost single handedly sending Oakland to its season-worst fourth straight defeat. Manager Joe Girardi said before the game he believes Teixeira is getting back to his former slugging self.

Derek Jeter hit a go-ahead RBI single in the third to give him 3,153 career hits for 15th on baseball's career list, then Jeter beat out a bunt single in the fifth to tie George Brett for 14th place with 3,154. Alex Rodriguez added a sacrifice fly in New York's three-run fifth.

Reddick connected leading off the third for his 13th home run and second in as many games and Collin Cowgill had a season-high three hits, but the A's lost their eighth in a row at home to the Yankees in the Coliseum.

"After the home run he threw more sliders and curves and that made his fastball look even faster coming in," Reddick said of Sabathia.

Cespedes planned to take batting practice on the field Sunday for the second straight day then leave for a short rehab assignment, which he expects to be two games. Inge is playing rehab games with Triple-A Sacramento, and suspended slugger Manny Ramirez is eligible to play again Wednesday at Minnesota on his 40th birthday.

"We haven't been as good offensively as we thought we'd be at this point in the season but our expectations don't change," manager Bob Melvin said.

Sabathia (6-2), back in his native Bay Area with 200 friends and family in the stands, outpitched former Yankee Bartolo Colon and drew cheers when introduced before the game. Former A's six-time Gold Glove third baseman Eric Chavez also received a warm welcome when he came to the plate leading off the third, and again after he doubled.

Jonny Gomes hit a two-out RBI single off Sabathia in the first to put Oakland ahead, then New York quickly tied it on Cano's drive into the right field bleachers to start the second.

Teixeira followed up a two-hit night with a two-run homer in Friday's 6-3 win by adding four more hits for a season high and his 22nd career four-hit game. He singled leading off the eighth before getting caught off the bag on an unassisted double play by A's first baseman Adam Rosales, who first fielded Raul Ibanez's liner.

New York then loaded the bases against A's reliever Graham Godfrey, who hit Jeter with a pitch in the back of his left shoulder to force in a run. Godfrey had been slated to start Monday at Minnesota but now that will be Travis Blackley.

The Yankees' winning streak in Oakland dates to July 5, 2010 — their longest unbeaten run in this venue since it opened in 1968 and Oakland's longest skid in the series. New York has won 12 of 13 here overall and is 23-9 since the start of the 2004 season.

Colon (4-5) allowed six runs on nine hits in six innings and didn't walk a batter for the fifth time in his 11 starts and third in the last four outings.

The 39-year-old Colon was trying to win back-to-back starts for the first time since April 13 and 18. He then had a five-start winless stretch in which he went 0-3 before beating the Giants in San Francisco last Sunday.

The right-hander got through a 1-2-3 first on eight pitches, then surrendered Cano's seventh home run.

"I felt good but I made a couple of mistakes they hit for home runs," he said. "I'm throwing strikes that I try to locate on the corners but I'm not getting them where I want and they hit them very hard."

NOTES: Colon, whose birthday was Thursday, became the fifth pitcher in Oakland history to start a game at age 39 or older. ... Tommy Milone (6-3) pitches for the A's on Sunday in his first appearance vs. New York, which counters with Hiroki Kuroda (3-6) in his first outing against Oakland since June 17, 2009, with the Dodgers. He is trying for his first road win after an 0-4 start.

**MLB.COM**

## **Yanks overpower A's behind Tex's two homers**

**CC wins for first time in three starts; Jeter moves up hits list**

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com | 5/26/2012 8:36 PM ET

OAKLAND -- The nagging cough that sapped Mark Teixeira's energy for weeks appears to be a thing of the past, and so is the slugger's experiment of chasing batting-average-boosting singles.

Teixeira has returned to a mindset that has proven trusty for years, which is to swing hard and blast the ball over the wall. It worked on Saturday, as Teixeira homered twice among his four hits to lead the Yankees past the Athletics, 9-2, at O.co Coliseum.

"You can always try to change things, you can try to tinker with things, but I am who I am," Teixeira said. "I wouldn't know how to explain what kind of hitter I am. I just go up there, see the ball and try to hit it really hard."

Robinson Cano also homered for the Yankees, who won their fourth straight game. Pitching in front of about 200 family members and friends, local product CC Sabathia tossed seven sharp innings to log his first victory in three starts.

But the star of the afternoon was Teixeira, who hit a solo fourth-inning homer and laced a two-run single in the fifth off former teammate Bartolo Colon, who allowed six runs in six innings.

Teixeira added a shift-beating hit in the eighth before homering off Graham Godfrey in the ninth, a two-run shot, giving him his eighth of the season.

"It's what we've always known he's capable of doing," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "Tex is another guy who can carry your club for a while; that's how hot he can get. He swung the bat great today."

Home run hitting is vital for the Yankees, who are 25-11 when hitting at least one home run. They are 0-10 in games without a homer.

"When you can hit a home run, it's instant offense," Teixeira said. "It makes your team feel good, it pumps everybody up, whether it's a solo shot or a grand slam. Chicks dig the long ball. Fans dig the long ball. Yeah, I said it. It's fun hitting home runs because not everyone can do it."

New York utilized an aggressive approach against Colon, having seen the hurler throw heat around the strike zone during his surprising comeback season with the Yankees last year.

"We all know he throws a lot of fastballs, so you want to be able to not miss a pitch when he throws it over the plate," said Cano, who slugged a long solo homer to start the offense in the second inning.

Derek Jeter laced a run-scoring single in the third inning for his 3,153rd career hit, breaking a tie with Paul Waner for 15th on the all-time list. Jeter later legged out a bunt single to tie George Brett for 14th place with 3,154 hits.

Alex Rodriguez also had a sacrifice fly for the Yankees, who have won eight consecutive games in Oakland, their longest streak since the facility opened in 1968.

"With a team like this, you throw the ball in the middle of the plate, they make you pay," Athletics manager Bob Melvin said. "With the depth in their lineup power-wise, it's going to go out of the park."

The pride of nearby Vallejo, Calif., Sabathia has always had mixed results pitching at the Coliseum, where he paid to watch his hometown A's as a child and still holds season tickets for the Raiders.

That held true in the early going on Saturday, as Jonny Gomes stroked a run-scoring single in the first inning and Sabathia pitched out of a bases-loaded jam in the second by inducing a fielder's choice.

"[My] command got a little off and [the] fastball command wasn't there, so I was just trying to make some pitches and stay behind the ball," Sabathia said. "I was able to get it back later in the game."

Josh Reddick unloaded on a long solo home run facing Sabathia in the third to tie the score, but the left-hander settled in after that, keeping Oakland off the board the rest of the way.

"His ball was cutting a little today early on," Girardi said. "I didn't think he had command of it down and away early on. He found it and that's when he sailed through."

Sabathia walked two and struck out four in his first start at the Coliseum since July 6, 2010, when he also beat the A's. He improved to 4-5 in 12 career starts there.

"It always feels good to be able to come home and pitch in front of the family," Sabathia said.

Arguably nobody left the Coliseum feeling better than Teixeira, though, who has cleared his mind and is showing promise that he could be getting back on track for another of his 30-homer, 100-RBIs campaigns after all.

Having mostly shaken the cough from his inflamed airways -- though he had to pause during a postgame interview to chug from a water bottle -- Teixeira has hit three homers and is 6-for-10 since the Yankees arrived in California.

"I'm glad I'm seeing some results, because then you'd probably be asking me what's my next plan," Teixeira said. "I'm just being real aggressive with my swings, trying to let it go, which I've done my whole career."

## Teixeira hits two homers as Yanks beat A's, 9-2

SATURDAY, MAY 26, 2012 · LAST UPDATED: SATURDAY MAY 26, 2012, 11:15 PM  
BY PETE CALDERA  
STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND, Calif. – Mark Teixeira had made a mental bonfire of all the charts and graphs and stats of his at-bats against the shift.

He tuned out the talk about how he ought to be hitting for a higher average.

As soon as the persistent coughing from his bronchial infection had subsided, Teixeira vowed to begin hacking at pitches the way he used to.

“My whole career, I’ve been a certain kind of hitter, and it’s worked out pretty well,” Teixeira said on Saturday, following a four-hit afternoon with two homers and five RBI against the Athletics.

“I’ve tried to change a few times,” Teixeira said. “It hasn’t worked.”

Teixeira’s first fourth-inning solo shot off ex-teammate Bartolo Colon put the Yankees in front, and his second homer — a two-run shot off Graham Godfrey — stamped a satisfying 9-2 victory before 27,112 fans at Oakland Coliseum.

CC Sabathia (6-2) lasted seven innings for the Yankees’ fourth straight win, while Colon (4-5) was touched for six runs in six innings on nine hits — including Robinson Cano’s mammoth second inning solo shot.

With two singles, Derek Jeter (2 RBI) passed Paul Waner and moved into a 15th-place tie with George Brett on the all-time hits list at 3,154. But it was Teixeira’s seventh and eighth home runs of the year — giving him three homers in the past two days — that commanded attention.

“It’s instant offense. It pumps everybody up,” Teixeira said. “Chicks dig the long ball, fans did the long ball. It’s fun hitting home runs. Not everyone can do it.”

Teixeira couldn’t hit any from the bench last weekend, when manager Joe Girardi essentially gave him a three-day pass to calm a month-long respiratory problem and recharge his first baseman’s energy level.

"You have to wonder how much it took out of him every day," said Girardi, who twice batted Teixeira seventh last week. "His cough was violent, too. Physically it had to be tough on him."

Mentally, Teixeira used the break to reassess those early spring ideas about going the opposite way or even dropping the occasional bunt to beat the shift.

"I tried to make everybody happy," Teixeira said. "Maybe I'm not as good as I used to be. But I know 30 home runs and 100 RBI is what I expect every year, and that's what I'm going to continue to expect my entire career."

"I'd love to hit for a higher average," said Teixeira, now batting .248. "But trying to hit for a higher average takes away from the kind of hitter I am."

Teixeira (4-for-5) wasn't the only player with an aggressive plan. Knowing that Colon would be pumping strikes, the Yankees (25-21) came out swinging – starting with Cano's second homer in two days.

In the fifth, Teixeira's two-run single came on the heels of Alex Rodriguez's well-struck sacrifice fly and Cano's sharp double for a 6-2 lead.

"We know [Colon] throws a lot of strikes," Cano said. "And you definitely don't want to miss your pitch when he throws it over the plate."

Colon was long gone when a ninth-inning blast to center capped Teixeira's day.

"I live off my hot streaks. That's just the kind of hitter I've always been," Teixeira said. "You want to have three or four games in a row when you're hitting a home run every night, you're driving in two or three every night."

Last weekend's respite allowed Teixeira more time in the weight room, and better work in the batting cages with hitting coach Kevin Long.

"After anything we try, or any new drill, [he says to] be who you are, and take you're 'A' swing," Teixeira said, reciting Long's advice. "That's what I need to start doing again."





## Yankees win fourth straight with 9-2 victory over Oakland

Published: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 9:08 PM Updated: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 9:58 PM



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

OAKLAND — Perhaps Mark Teixeira had lost touch with his identity.

The Yankees first baseman spoke this winter of bunting against shifts. He entertained the notion of driving pitches the other way. He shared his desire to counter the defensive alignments that had eaten away at his batting average.

Yet those answers only seemed to add to his problems, which is why he has gone back to a simpler approach. Teixeira has resolved to simply hit balls as hard as he can — regardless of direction, regardless of shifts — a method that has produced some instant results.

Once again, the Yankees offered evidence that they've snapped out of a team-wide malaise, bullying the A's in a 9-2 victory Saturday. And Teixeira once more found himself in the middle of it all.

In his second game back in his familiar No. 5 position in the batting order, Teixeira knocked in five runs. He did with a long solo homer in the fourth — his second in as many days — and a timely two-run single with two outs in the fifth.

In the ninth, Teixeira blasted a two-run shot to finish 4-for-5 with five RBI.

"Chicks dig the long ball, the fans dig the long ball," Teixeira said. "Yeah, I said it. It's fun hitting home runs because not everyone can do it."

Against A's starter Bartolo Colon — who a season ago revived his career in the Bronx — the Yankees took advantage of the right-hander's tendency to throw strikes early in the count. With the offense on the attack, the Yankees chased Colon after six innings, tagging him for six runs on nine hits.

After looking so hapless with runners on, the Yankees suddenly looked comfortable, toppling the A's with a lesson in situational hitting. Robinson Cano added a solo homer — also his second home run in as many days — and Derek Jeter contributed a run-scoring hit. Alex Rodriguez tacked on another run on a sacrifice fly.

The support gave plenty of leeway for Yankees lefty CC Sabathia, who even without his best stuff, kept the A's to two runs in seven innings.

That Teixeira has been the catalyst is yet another good sign that the Yankees might have finally righted themselves. While other players in the lineup could be blamed for the team's run-scoring issues, Teixeira emerged as the poster boy for the team's struggles.

With his batting average languishing, and his power sapped, it was Teixeira that manager Joe Girardi chose to drop from fifth to seventh in the batting order. The move down came after Girardi kept Teixeira from starting in three-straight games.

He hoped that the rest would help Teixeira kick a cough that had lingered since early in the season. He also wanted to take some of the spotlight off Teixeira. Looking back, Teixeira said the breather helped him recover physically, but also readjust mentally. He resolved to stop worrying about his batting average.

"Enough people tell you to do things, and you do them," Teixeira said, though he declined to specify who pushed the changes. "You respect what people ask you to do but it just didn't work."

His homer in the fourth pushed the Yankees ahead 3-2. And his two-run single in the fifth widened his team's lead to 6-2 — a healthy margin against an A's lineup that ranks as the least productive in the American League.

"I'm glad I'm seeing some results," he said. "Because then, you guys would probably be asking me what's my next plan."

Even with the results coming so quickly, Teixeira said he couldn't pin down a specific reason for his turnaround. Perhaps, the days off allowed his body some much-needed rest. Or maybe, his simplified approach has allowed him to feel comfortable again. Teixeira also didn't rule out simple luck for the hot streak.

Said Girardi: "As long as it's happening, I don't care what the reason is."

## **Yankees and Teixeira stay hot with fourth straight win**

Posted By [Chad Jennings](#) On May 26, 2012 @ 6:49 pm In [Misc](#) | [48 Comments](#)

With today's 9-2 win in Oakland, the Yankees have matched their longest winning streak of the season and continued their offensive resurgence. Mark Teixeira and Robinson Cano each homered for a second consecutive day, the Yankees scored at least six runs for a third straight day and starter CC Sabathia snapped a modest two-game losing streak by allowing two runs through seven innings. Five different Yankees had at least two hits, including Teixeira who went 4-for-5 with two home runs and five RBI. It was only the second time this season that Teixeira had more than two RBI in a game.



Saturday, May 26, 2012

## Slump solution: Don't mess with Tex

By Wallace Matthews  
ESPNNewYork.com

OAKLAND, Calif. -- For [Mark Teixeira](#), the solution to his hitting woes may have been as simple as telling the voices inside his head to kindly shut the heck up.

This is not to imply that the [New York Yankees](#) first baseman is delusional, but simply human. As in listening to all sorts of advice from all sorts of people, some of it good, some not so good, and when taken in one big gulp, all of it confusing.

So after Teixeira busted out of his early slump in a big way on Saturday afternoon, with two home runs, four hits and five RBIs in the Yankees' 9-2 victory over the Athletics at Oakland Coliseum, he summed up his dilemma thusly: "I tried to make everybody happy."

He declined to identify just who "everybody" is, but it is safe to assume it is an amalgamation of coaches, teammates, friends and family members, all of whom had their own theories for why Teixeira, a career .280 hitter, was spending most of May mired in the quicksand of the .220s.

And after a while, even the most confident of professional athletes might be tempted to consider the possibility that some, or all, of them had a point.

In truth, the voices started working on Teixeira over the winter, and maybe even as far back as last season, when, although amassing his customary power numbers -- 39 homers and 111 RBIs - he finished up with a relatively anemic batting average of .248.

Last season, there was an easy and convenient culprit: The Shift. And when Teixeira showed up at spring training, it was with a new body, peeled of about 20 pounds after a raw-juice regimen, and a new attitude: Instead of banging his head into the shift, he would try to work around it. Go the other way. Lay down a bunt now and then. In other words, get away from all the things that had gotten him this far.

This year, another culprit reared its ugly head: The Cough. For more than a month now, Teixeira has been wracked with the kind of chest rattles that used to send patients to Blackwell's Island for a long and uncertain recovery.

Between The Shift and The Cough, Teixeira looked nothing like the player who had averaged 35 home runs and 113 RBIs for each of his first nine seasons, and he certainly didn't look like what the Yankees had made him, a \$22.5 million player for eight years. In fact, he didn't even look

like a No. 5 hitter anymore, and for a time he wasn't after Joe Girardi dropped him to seventh in the batting order.

But to hear Teixeira tell it, this week represented something of a breakthrough, an epiphany if you will, when this 32-year-old with a great past, a miserable present and an uncertain future suddenly realized it was time to go back to what he had always been.

Simply put, Teixeira said, "I tried. It didn't work."

It was similar to what Derek Jeter said last season after months of trying to rebuild a swing that had served him quite well for 15 seasons, and that decision had worked out well for Jeter, who is now batting .342.

And for the past couple of days at least, it has worked well for Teixeira, who after having homered Friday night added two more on Saturday, the first off former teammate Bartolo Colon in the fourth inning, and the second in the ninth, with a runner on, off reliever Graham Godfrey.

Just for good measure, he dealt a blow to The Shift, as well, singling twice, once driving in two runs, despite hitting the ball right at five fielders bunched into half a baseball diamond.

"A little bit of that is luck, it really is," Teixeira said. "But you hit the ball hard, and you hope to find a hole."

The home runs, however, are another story. "They're not luck," he said.

For Teixeira, the home runs are the residue of design, a combination of his natural uppercut stroke, his incorrigible tendency to pull the ball from both sides of the plate, and his newly rediscovered attitude toward hitting.

It came to him, he said, last weekend, when Girardi decided to send The Cough to bed for three days in an attempt to get rid of it once and for all.

"During those days off, I was getting a little bit of energy back, feeling a little better, and then just assessing," he said. "That's when I decided, let's wipe the slate clean. What do I need to do to get back to being me? [Hitting coach] Kevin [Long] and I decided, 'OK, if you're feeling good, and you've got your bat speed back, swing hard, and let's start driving the ball again.'"

If it sounds too simple, it probably is, but as Girardi said after the game, "There's a lot of reasons it could be happening. But as long as it's happening, I don't care what the reasons are."

For the past couple of weeks, Girardi has tried to protect Teixeira by affecting not to understand why so much of "the focus" was on his non-productive No. 5 hitter, and by indicting the rest of his lineup for similar sins of non-production.

But it was nearly impossible to obscure the truth, that in a lineup of early-season underachievers, Teixeira was the worst offender of all.

However, one point Girardi made was valid before Teixeira's breakout game on Saturday, and even more valid now: The true measure of Mark Teixeira's value lies in his run production, not his batting average.

"He is not a .240 hitter," Girardi said. But, asked if Teixeira could still hit 30-plus homers and drive in 110 runs while hitting .240, Girardi said, "I'll take it."

And why not? The Yankees have Jeter to hit for average and get on base, and Alex Rodriguez to hit his .270 with 25 or so home runs, and Robby Cano, who also homered on Saturday, to do a lot of everything, and they might even get Brett Gardner back to set the table in his own unique way.

So is it really all that important for Teixeira to hit 25 points higher at the expense of homers and RBIs? Teixeira, for one, doesn't think so.

"I'd love to hit for a higher average, of course, but trying to hit for a higher average takes away from the kind of hitter I am," he said. "If you ask anybody, would you rather take the higher average or 30 [home runs] and 100 [RBIs], you'd take 30 and 100 every time.

"It takes three singles to get a run in. It only takes one home run. And we have to score runs to win. No one cares what our average is. Everyone cares how many runs we score, how many games we win."

That sounds pretty simple, but sometimes, even the simplest thing can't be heard over the clamor of other voices inside one's head.

For one day at least, Mark Teixeira turned off the voices, and turned the power back on.



Saturday, May 26, 2012

## Cano heating up

OAKLAND, Calif. -- With his home run, double and single in a 9-2 victory over Oakland, **Robinson Cano** now has homers in two straight games -- and three in his last four -- after hitting just four in the Yankees' first 42 games.

Over the past 23 games, Cano is hitting .352 (31-for-88) with six HRs and 16 RBI.

And he continued his habit of belting **Bartolo Colon**: Cano came in batting .600 against his former teammate, and after going 2-for-3 against him Saturday, raised that mark to .625.

"We all know he throws a lot of fastballs, so you want to be able to not miss a pitch when he throws it over the plate," Cano said.

With both Cano and **Mark Teixeira** hitting well, the Yankees' lineup for one of the few times all season is beginning to resemble the wrecking machine it was last year. **Joe Girardi** called it "a market correction."

"I've said all along that these guys haven't been great hitters all these years by accident," Girardi said. "It's not something that they rolled into one year and all of a sudden became good hitters. These guys have been doing it year after year after year and, eventually, things are going to even out."





Saturday, May 26, 2012

## Rough day for Jeter

OAKLAND, Calif. -- In addition to getting two hits, driving in two runs, leapfrogging one Hall of Famer on baseball's all-time hits list and pulling even with another, **Derek Jeter** left Oakland Coliseum with a sore wrist and a bruised shoulder.

Naturally, he is fine and will likely play Sunday as the Yankees attempt to sweep their three-game series with the A's.

The first injury happened in the second inning, when Jeter dived to his left for **Jemile Weeks'** hot grounder. Jeter speared the ball, which became an infield hit, but saved a run as **Kurt Suzuki**, on second base, could go no further than third. But in the process, Jeter rolled over on his left wrist and was a little slow in getting up.

"I was a little bit concerned," **Joe Girardi** said. "Those are the ones you worry about. You see outfielders leave for a long time when that happens. But **Robby Cano** waved us off."

In the eighth inning, Jeter got plunked in the back of the left shoulder with the bases loaded to force in the Yankees' seventh run. Earlier, his RBI single in the third moved him ahead of **Paul Waner** for 15th place on the hits parade, and his bunt single in the fifth drew him even with **George Brett** for 14th place, with 3,154 hits.

Jeter slipped out of the clubhouse without speaking to the media, but not only was he not wearing any sort of bandage on his wrist, he was carrying a pair of shoes in his left hand. So considering his history, it is safe to assume that he will be in the lineup Sunday.



Saturday, May 26, 2012

## Rapid Reaction: Yankees 9, Athletics 2

**What it means:** That the Yankees have put together their first four-game winning streak since the first week of the season. Their 7-2 victory at the expense of the overmatched Athletics was significant for more than just that, however; it offered more evidence that the most beleaguered hitter in their lineup might finally be coming out of his funk.

**On the Mark:** Mark Teixeira said on Friday night he felt like he was coming around, and today he came all the way around on a fourth-inning home run -- his second in two nights -- a two-run single in the fifth, and another single leading off the eighth.

Then, in the top of the ninth, he put the exclamation point on his big day with a two-run shot over the centerfield fence. Suddenly, the numbers don't look so bad: .248 with eight homers, and his five RBIs give him 28, second-best on the team behind Nick Swisher (29). And, oh yeah, both of his singles were hit right through the shift.

**Nice to see you, Bart:** The last time the Yankees faced Bartolo Colon, in 2007, they smacked him around for seven runs in two innings. So it was a happy reunion with their erstwhile teammate, who they once again beat like a kettle drum, reaching him for six runs and nine hits, two of them home runs, in six innings.

**Cano-ing, going, gone:** Robby Cano, who came in with three hits in five at-bats versus Colon, added two more in three at-bats today, including his seventh homer of the season in the fourth inning. He also added a single in the eighth to get his batting average over .300. Cano, who had four home runs in the first 42 games of the season, now has three in his last four games.

**Captain movin' on up:** Derek Jeter's third-inning RBI single, which gave the Yankees a 2-1 lead, moved him into sole possession of 15th place on the all-time hit list, ahead of Paul Waner, and his bunt single in the fifth moved him into a tie with George Brett for 14th place, with 3,154 hits.

**A ribbie the hard way:** Jeter picked up an RBI in his last at-bat when A's reliever Graham Godfrey drilled him in the left shoulder with the bases loaded in the eighth. Jeter now has three times as many career HBPs with the bases loaded (3) as HRs (1).

**Ace back on track:** CC Sabathia snapped his personal two-game losing streak -- and avoided his first

three-game skid since 2008 -- by pitching seven increasingly strong innings, marred only by a first-inning run on two singles, and **Josh Reddick's** majestic home run to dead center in the third.

**CC owns CC:** That would be **Collin Cowgill**, a second-year outfielder for the A's, who in his first appearance against Sabathia went 3-for-3 with three singles.

**What's coming:** A column on Teixeira's resurgence, as well as whatever blog items come out of the postgame clubhouse.

**Tomorrow:** The Yankees go for the sweep behind **Hiroki Kuroda** (3-6, 4.56), who faces LHP **Tommy Milone** (6-3, 3.75), first pitch at 4:05 p.m.

# CC gets win in front of 'home' crowd

By Chad Jennings

cjennings@ohud.com

OAKLAND — The cheering section was in the right-field seats. Some friends. Some family. Some random acquaintances. CC Sabathia wasn't exactly sure who had the tickets, he only knew he'd bought 200 of them.

"It always feels good to be able to come home and pitch in front of the family," Sabathia said.

The Yankees' ace allowed two runs through seven innings on Saturday, picking up his sixth win of the season just a few miles from where he grew up in

Vallejo, Calif.

"CC was getting ground balls, that was the important thing," manager Joe Girardi said. "He wasn't giving up balls in the gap or long fly balls. He was giving up ground balls."

Oakland's lineup included seven players hitting .233 or worse, and only one of those had more than two home runs. It seemed to set the stage for a Sabathia masterpiece, but the Yankees' ace has always struggled at the Coliseum, and he allowed seven base runners and two runs in the first three innings.

He allowed just two hits

and didn't let a runner past first base in his final four innings.

"Just trying to make sure I stayed behind the ball," Sabathia said. "Command got a little off and fastball command wasn't there so I was just trying to make some pitches and get behind the ball."

**Back in Oakland:** Eric Chavez was back at third base at the Oakland Coliseum on Saturday, a familiar spot for a player who spent 13 seasons playing the position for the Athletics. Chavez is now a role player with the Yankees, and this weekend has been his

first trip to Oakland since he left the A's after the 2010 season.

"The team's changed around a little bit," he said. "It's more saying hi to the security guards and the clubhouse kids."

In the tunnel connecting the visiting clubhouse to the first-base dugout, the Coliseum has a large framed picture of Chavez hanging among pictures of iconic former A's. Despite being a popular piece of some good Oakland teams, Chavez was booed during his first at-bat on Friday.

"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."

**Jeter continues to climb:** With a bunt single in the fifth inning, Derek Jeter moved into a tie with George Brett for 14th place on baseball's all-time hits list. Jeter has 3,154. Next on the list is Cal Ripken Jr., who ranks 13th all-time with 3,184.

Jeter went 2 for 4 and has five hits in his past three games.

Newsday 5/27/12

## YANKS NOTEBOOK

# Ibañez has had large role

BY ERIK BOLAND  
erik.boland@newsday.com

OAKLAND, Calif. — When the Yankees signed Raul Ibañez, essentially choosing him over fan favorites Johnny Damon and Hideki Matsui, tilting things in his favor was the team's belief that he'd be a better outfielder than Damon or Matsui if the need arose. It did — far more than anyone expected.

"I figured he'd be our DH against righties all the time," Joe Girardi said. "I didn't think that Gardy [Brett Gardner] was going to be out a month. . . . In my mind, I had him playing the outfield maybe once a week, twice a week, maybe three times in two weeks just to give some guys a blow, but we haven't been able to do that just because of the injuries."

The primary one, of course, is the right elbow strain that has sidelined Gardner. Ibañez, who will turn 40 this coming Saturday, made his 17th start in leftfield yesterday to go with six starts in rightfield and nine at DH.

Girardi said he's watching the outfielder — who has nine homers and 27 RBIs — because of his age but hasn't seen anything worrisome. "I think he's doing great, physically he's great," he said. "He's in tremendous shape."

### ■ Being cautious

Gardner is scheduled to swing a bat tomorrow, but he won't be rushed. "I have a concern about that," Girardi said of the injury lingering. "For the whole season? No, but as I told him, if we have another setback, you're probably looking at the All-Star break, so we have to make sure before you go out and play some games that you don't feel it at all. No pressure, no little bit of swelling. Nothing."

### ■ Extra bases

David Robertson (strained oblique), who played catch Friday, will do so again tomorrow. . . . The Yankees won their eighth straight at the O.co Coliseum and 12th of 13.

## Postgame notes: "I am who I am"

Posted By [Chad Jennings](#) On May 26, 2012 @ 9:17 pm In [Misc](#) | [152 Comments](#)

Mark Teixeira wouldn't really go into detail, but then again, maybe it was worrying about the details that got him into trouble in the first place. What he said this afternoon about his brutal start to the season was that "enough people tell you to try to do things, and you do them." He said he tried to change his approach, tried to become something he's not, and it was only after sitting out those three games last weekend that he decided to just be himself.

The results have been instant.

"Some guys can sort of shorten their swing up and slap it the other way, use their speed," Teixeira said. "It's obviously not me. I've been a guy that's always hit a lot of fly balls, a lot of long fly balls, home runs. I've tried to change a few times and it hasn't worked. ... You can try to tinker with things, but I am who I am. I wouldn't know how to explain what kind of hitter I am, I just go up there, see the ball and try to hit it really hard."

Who tried to make him change that approach?

"It doesn't matter," Teixeira said. "Kevin (Long) and I, we love working together, and he's always had 100 percent faith in me. We always talk about just being positive. He's always told me, 'Whatever you want me to do, we'll try it. We'll work on it.' But after anything that we try, any new drill that we do, he's always like, 'Be who you are. Take your A swing.' That's what I need to start doing again."

In other words: Remember all of that spring training talk about going the other way, beating the shift, and maybe even dropping a few bunts? Forget about that. It's not what made Teixeira one of the game's best all-around hitters three years ago, and he's decided it's not going to make him a better hitter today. If his batting average suffers, he's OK with it. Joe Girardi said the same thing this morning.

With that new approach — same as his old approach — Teixeira had four hits, two home runs and five RBI this afternoon. Since sitting out those three games and moving back into the lineup on Monday, Teixeira has homered three times, doubled twice collected eight hits and driven in eight runs.

"I told you guys a couple of days ago what I was going to do, and I've been doing it," Teixeira said. "I'm glad I'm seeing some results, because (if not) then you'd probably be asking me, what's my next plan? Just being real aggressive with my swings. Trying to let it go, which I've done my whole career."

[2] • Pitching just a few miles from where he grew up, CC Sabathia paid for 200 tickets to today's game. His cheering section was in right field, and they watched him settle in after allowing two runs and seven base runners in the first three innings. "Just trying to make sure I stayed behind the ball," Sabathia said. "Command got a little off and fastball command wasn't there, so I was just trying to make some pitches and stay behind the ball. I was able to get it back later in the game."

- Larry Rothschild helped Sabathia figure out his mechanical flaw, but Chris Stewart noticed it too. "It's just something that Larry says, (and) Stew said something," Sabathia said. "Just making sure I was on top of the ball and not cutting the ball. Early in the game, everything was cutting back over the plate and I gave up some hits."

- In his last four innings, Sabathia gave up two hits and didn't allow a runner past first base.

- Sabathia is 3-2 with a 2.75 ERA in five starts this month. He was 3-0 but had a 4.58 ERA in five starts last month.

[3] • Teixeira isn't the only middle-of-the-order hitter who's been hot lately. Robinson Cano has homered in back-to-back games and has three homers in his past four games. He's hitting .352 with six home runs in his past 23 games. "You don't want just a few guys," Cano said. "You want the whole team to get going."

- Derek Jeter was one of five Yankees with at least two hits in the game. He moved into a tie with George Brett for 14th on baseball's all-time hits list. Jeter has 3,154 hits, and next on the list is Cal Ripken Jr.

- Pretty good defensive day for Jeter as well. "CC was getting ground balls," Girardi said. "That was the important thing. He wasn't giving up balls in the gap or long fly balls. He was giving up ground balls, and Jeter was able to get to some of them."

- The Yankees were able to beat their old teammate Bartolo Colon, who gave up six runs on nine hits through six innings. "We all know he throws a lot of fastballs," Cano said. "So you want to be able to not miss a pitch when he throws it over the plate."

05/26/12 8:48 PM ET

## **Jeter ties Brett for 14th on all-time hits list**

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- With two hits on Saturday, Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter moved into a tie for 14th place on baseball's all-time hits list with Hall of Famer George Brett, owning 3,154 career hits.

Jeter legged out a bunt single in the fifth inning facing Athletics starter Bartolo Colon to equal Brett, who compiled his hit total over 21 seasons from 1973-1993, all with the Kansas City Royals.

Earlier in the game, Jeter stroked a third-inning RBI single off Colon to break a tie with Paul Waner for 15th place on the all-time list with 3,153. Nicknamed "Big Poison," Waner notched his hits over 20 seasons from 1926-1945 with the Pirates, Dodgers, Braves and Yankees. Waner had just one hit in 10 at-bats for New York.

Cal Ripken Jr. is the next name on the all-time list ahead of Brett with 3,184 career hits. Jeter is baseball's active hits leader and owns the most hits by a shortstop in Major League history.

### **Feeling better, Teixeira letting loose with swing**

OAKLAND -- Mark Teixeira grew tired of an early-season attempt to boost his batting average and wants to return to swinging hard and not trying to guide the ball.

Blasting a homer on Friday and two on Saturday -- giving him eight on the season -- tells the Yankees switch-hitter that he might be making a wise decision.

"I'm just trying to grind through it, trying to be a little more aggressive at the plate," said Teixeira, who also delivered a two-run single among his four hits in Saturday's 9-2 win. "... I'm feeling a lot better. The days off have helped. I'm just trying to make a little bit of progress every day."

Yankees manager Joe Girardi was pleased to hear that Teixeira was trying to return to the form that has permitted him to hit at least 30 home runs and drive in 100 runs in each of the last eight seasons, the only Major League player to do so.

"That's what he's been," Girardi said. "He's been a guy that's hit for power and driven in runs. Production is what we want. We want production from him. We know he's going to play a great first base and we want production from him."

Teixeira entered Saturday batting .231 with 23 RBIs, a notch below even the .248 average he posted last season and thought to be unacceptable, dipping from .256 in 2010 and .292 during the Yankees' 2009 World Series championship season.

Girardi said that the defensive shifts on Teixeira probably take away two or three hits each 100 at-bats but said that he still believes Teixeira can get back to an elite offensive level.

"If he hits .270 and has 35 [homers] and 115 [RBIs], are we going to complain? No way," Girardi said. "I'll be thrilled to death with that."

Girardi was asked if he would be fine with a .240 batting average and 35 homers from Teixeira, a thought the manager rolled around for a moment.



"Probably not," he said. "But my point is that I don't believe he's a .240 hitter."

### **Ibanez providing Yanks quality time in outfield**

OAKLAND -- The Yankees envisioned Raul Ibanez as their everyday designated hitter against right-handers who would play in the field occasionally. Instead, the veteran has spent more time patrolling the outfield.

Saturday marked Ibanez's 23rd start of the season in the outfield, 17 of which have come in left field with Brett Gardner on the disabled list.

By contrast, Ibanez has been the DH just 10 times, three fewer than Alex Rodriguez, who was the DH again on Saturday. Manager Joe Girardi said that Ibanez, who was batting .270 with nine homers and 27 RBIs, has not exceeded expectations by playing defense so often.

"When I saw him in Spring Training, the way he was moving, I knew he could do that," Girardi said. "In my mind, I had him playing the outfield once a week, twice a week, three times in two weeks, just to give some guys a blow. But we haven't been able to do that because of the injuries."

Gardner is working out in Tampa, Fla., and hopes to resume swinging a bat on Monday to test his strained right elbow. The Yankees want to make sure that Gardner does not have another setback, having not played in a Major League game since April 17.

"If we have another setback, we're probably looking at the All-Star break," Girardi said. "So we've got to make sure before [Gardner] goes out and play some games that [he] doesn't feel it at all."

### **Bombers bits**

- Yankees reliever David Robertson (strained left oblique) is scheduled to play catch on Monday. The Yankees do not expect him to return from the disabled list during this road trip.
- Curtis Granderson has played in all 399 1/3 innings of Yankees baseball this season entering Saturday's action, all in center field. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, he is one of seven players in the Major Leagues to have played in all of his club's innings. The others are the Mariners' Ichiro Suzuki, the Orioles' Adam Jones, the Braves' Dan Uggla, the Phillies' Shane Victorino, the Cubs' Starlin Castro and the Reds' Joey Votto.
- Fans who would like to spend a game in Yankees general manager Brian Cashman's Yankee Stadium suite can bid on the chance at [www.charitybuzz.com](http://www.charitybuzz.com). The proceeds will benefit Covenant House, a charity Cashman supports.
- On this date in 1959, the Yankees acquired Ralph Terry and Hector Lopez from the Kansas City Athletics for Johnny Kucks, Tom Sturdivant and Jerry Lumpe.

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## Yankees notes: Happy homecoming for CC Sabathia

SUNDAY, MAY 27, 2012

Welcome home

CC Sabathia had nearly 200 friends, family members and kids from his hometown of nearby Vallejo, Calif., on hand to witness his sixth victory of the year.

"It always feels good to come home and pitch here," Sabathia said. And to be backed by a nine-run, 14-hit attack "definitely relaxes you."

The lefty ace had trouble with his fastball command and toted a high pitch count, yielding two runs – including a solo homer to Josh Reddick – in the first three innings.

From there, Sabathia allowed just two more hits and was helped by some terrific defense by shortstop Derek Jeter.

Sabathia is 3-2 with a 2.75 ERA in five May starts after going 3-0 with a 2.58 ERA in April. He's also 6-1 in his past nine starts against the Athletics. The Yankees have won eight straight games at Oakland dating to 2010, and they're off to a 2-0 start on this nine-game, three-city road trip.

Hot cereal

Sabathia might've given up Cap'n Crunch cereal to lose weight but not his manager. Saturday morning, Joe Girardi mentioned a story from his Illinois youth about a family farmhouse located near railroad tracks. "A train derailed and one of the cars was full of Cap'n Crunch," Girardi said. "We had so much Cap'n Crunch over the next year, it was amazing. To this day I still like Cap'n Crunch." A year's supply of cereal from a derailed train car? "I didn't ask questions," Girardi said. "I was like 8 years old."

Briefs

Today's starter Hiroki Kuroda is seeking his first road win of the year. He's 0-4 with a 6.23 ERA in four starts away from Yankee Stadium. ... Seven of Mark Teixeira's eight homers have been hit on the road. ... Robinson Cano is batting .352 over his past 23 games with six homers and 16 RBI. ... Oakland has lost a season-high four straight.



## CC Sabathia's adjustment helps Yankees roll past A's

Published: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 9:10 PM Updated: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 9:59 PM



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

OAKLAND — Every time CC Sabathia threw a fastball, it seemed to drift over the plate. For three innings yesterday, the Yankees' ace tried to identify the mechanical flaws that led to the spotty command of his fastball. And, just in time, Sabathia found the answer.

In the Yankees' 9-2 victory over the A's Saturday, the left-hander recovered. Through three innings, he'd allowed two runs, and his pitch count had already drifted above 60. But by tightening his mechanics, Sabathia needed just 47 pitches to get through his next four innings.

Sabathia departed after allowing just two runs in seven innings to log one of his better career starts at the Coliseum.

"He settled down nicely," manager Joe Girardi said.

Sabathia, who grew up in nearby Vallejo, Calif., pitched before about 200 friends and family members.

"It always feels good to come home and pitch in front of my family," said Sabathia, who improved to 8-8 with a 4.84 ERA in 23 career starts in Oakland.

• **Yankees captain Derek Jeter joined Royals** great George Brett on the all-time hits list.

The Yankees shortstop bunted for a single in the fifth inning yesterday to record career hit No. 3,154, tying Brett for 14th on the all-time list. Jeter, who passed Paul Waner, needs just 30 more to tie another shortstop, the Orioles' Cal Ripken Jr.

Jeter has slowed down after opening the season on a tear. But even though his pace has slowed, Jeter entered play yesterday with 64 hits, tops in the American League. He only added to that total off Bartolo Colon.

In the third, Jeter singled up the middle to score Eric Chavez. In the fifth, his bunt toward the left side of the pitcher's mound resulted in a hit when second baseman Jemile Weeks didn't cover first base in time.

Jeter also helped the Yankees to another run in the eighth when he took a pitch off his back with the bases loaded.

- **The Yankees have won seven straight games** here dating to July 2010. It's the team's longest winning streak at the Coliseum since the A's arrived from Kansas City in 1968.

- **Robinson Cano has hit three homers in his last four games**, including a solo blast yesterday. Since slumping to begin the year, Cano is hitting .352 with six homers and 16 RBI over his last 23 contests.

- **The Yankees have been panned for their struggles** when facing a pitcher for the first time, though they've enjoyed a measure of success this season.

The Yankees face A's lefty Tommy Milone today, the ninth pitcher they will see for the first time. But so far, the Yankees are 4-4 in first-time encounters while tagging their opponents for a 4.37 ERA.

## Yanks gaining steam as they seek sweep of A's

By Spencer Fordin / MLB.com | 5/26/2012 7:44 PM ET

The A's will be playing to avoid an indignity on Sunday. Oakland hasn't been swept yet this season, but it will go into Sunday's finale against the Yankees having lost four straight and eight of its last 11 games. The A's are batting just .140 (18-for-129) during their four-game skid.

The Yankees, meanwhile, are playing through a four-game winning streak, which is tied for their longest of the year. New York has scored at least six runs in three straight games, and it will match veteran Hiroki Kuroda up against rookie left-hander Tommy Milone in the series finale.

Kuroda has lost three of his last four starts, and he's notched a 5.82 ERA and allowed six home runs in that span. Half of that output came in an 8-1 loss to Toronto, and Kuroda is 0-4 on the road this year. The 37-year-old had only three no-decisions in 32 starts last year with the Dodgers.

Milone, acquired from Washington as part of the offseason trade for Gio Gonzalez, has gone 4-0 with a 0.60 ERA in his first four starts at Oakland's O.co Coliseum. The 25-year-old southpaw has struck out (32) more than twice as many batters as he's walked (14) through his first nine starts for the A's.

Oakland's bullpen allowed three late runs in Saturday's 9-2 rout, but it's pitched pretty well over the life of the team's skid. The A's relief staff has worked 13 1/3 innings in the last four games and has pitched to a 2.63 ERA over that span. Now, Oakland will need that same effort to keep runs off the board.

"I've been a part of some good bullpens here," reliever Jerry Blevins said. "And we always seem to have a really good bullpen, but I've never been part of one where every single member of the bullpen is pretty much a lights-out pitcher. You've got guys that'll step in in any particular situation, and they're going to put up zeros. When one of our relievers gives up a run, it's like a shock, like, 'Oh wow, he's human.' I've never been a part of something like that."

### Yankees: Cano climbs over .300 mark

- Robinson Cano pushed his average to .302 and drilled his third homer in four games on Saturday, continuing a surge that has gone on for more than three weeks. Cano has hit safely in 19 of his last 23 games and has seen his batting average raised more than 45 points (from .255) since May 2.

Cano went 3-for-5 in Saturday's victory, notching a home run and a double. New York's second baseman leads the American League with 17 doubles this season, and since making his big league debut in 2005, he has more doubles (303) than any other Major League hitter.

#### **A's: Injuries take toll on lineup**

- The A's have seven players on the disabled list, and they fielded a starting lineup Saturday that featured four players batting under the Mendoza Line (.200). Oakland went into Saturday's game with the lowest batting average (.210) among all big league teams.

Outfielder Josh Reddick -- batting .271 with 13 homers -- went deep Saturday has been one of the team's only consistent offensive threats. Yoenis Cespedes, sidelined by a hand injury, is batting .245 with five home runs and could be back in the lineup by the end of next week.

#### **Worth noting**

- Derek Jeter's next hit will push him past Hall of Famer George Brett (3,154) for sole possession of 14th place on the all-time hit list.

- The Yankees have won 12 of their last 13 games in Oakland, and they haven't lost on the road against the A's since April 2010.

- Oakland is 11-12 in May and has had a winning record in this month in just two of the previous seven seasons.



## Yankees hope to build off productive night at the plate

Published: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 12:44 PM Updated: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 12:48 PM



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

OAKLAND -- Good afternoon, folks.

The **Yankees beat the A's 6-3** last night and they looked good doing it. The offense, whose struggles have been well documented, tagged Tyson Ross for three homers. One came off the bat of Mark Teixeira, the poster boy of the team's issues at the plate.

"The last two games have been good for us," he said. "We're used to scoring that many runs. More normal for us I think."

Nick Swisher, who also homered, said the team has adopted a simplified approach. After the game, he repeated a piece of advice from his grandmother: "Just hit the damn ball."

The question is whether the Yankees can vault themselves into a sustained run of success at the plate. If they do, home runs will likely be a key. The team has scored 52 percent of its runs this season on the long ball. As Teixeira pointed out after the game, the homer has its merits. When it comes to hitting with runners in scoring position, Teixeira said it's possible to hit into plenty of bad luck. With homers, defense is eliminated from the equation.

"Home runs don't get caught, and we're a team that's used to hitting a lot of them," he said. "And we'd like to hit a little bit more."

The Yankees today face an old friend in Bartolo Colon. He'll be opposed by lefty CC Sabathia.



## Yankees manager Joe Girardi encouraged by Mark Teixeira's plate approach

Published: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 3:22 PM / Updated: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 3:47 PM



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

OAKLAND -- Clearly, it was a sleepy morning in the Bay Area. Because out of Joe Girardi's pregame media briefing, these were the most interesting things we learned:

- 1.) A train filled with Cap'n Crunch cereal once derailed near a relative's house, giving Girardi and his siblings a year's supply of the stuff. (I imagine CC Sabathia would be jealous.)
- 2.) Girardi retains his lifelong love of cereal. Despite his reputation as a health nut, Girardi loves the sugary stuff like Lucky Charms.
- 3.) The manager never eats cereal with milk. He's lactose intolerant.

Anyway, sprinkled in Girardi's 10 minute ode to breakfast cereal, he said he's encouraged by Mark Teixeira's approach at the plate. In essence, Teixeira's focus is now squarely on hitting the ball hard instead of trying to guide it to certain parts of the field.

Said Girardi: "That's the last thing we want our hitters to do."





Sunday, May 27, 2012

## First Pitch: How sweep it is?

You have to go back a long way -- all the way to April 9-11 -- to find the last time the Yankees swept a series.

That one came at the expense of the Baltimore Orioles, who were not yet the squad that now sits atop the AL East, 11 games over .500.

Since then, the Yankees' season has been a series of fits and starts, of a win or two here, followed by a loss or two or three there.

At times, the problem has been the starting pitching, and at other, more recent times, it has been the hitting, or lack thereof, especially in clutch situations.

But this week, the bats have seemed to begin awakening from their long winter slumber, and after Saturday's 9-2 win over the Oakland Athletics the Yankees stand nine innings away from their first series sweep since the second series of the season.

True, it's only the A's, the low-budget, weak-hitting A's, but still, it is something the Yankees have not been able to do to anyone, from the mighty Texas Rangers to the lowly Kansas City Royals, practically all season long.

There has been a team-wide inconsistency that has made what is normally a commonplace occurrence practically impossible for them this season. So while another win over the A's won't be hard evidence that the Yankees' problems have been fixed or guarantee them a playoff spot, it will at least be a sign that for three games at least, they have been able to sustain a winning brand of baseball, which is a step in the right direction.

Once again, the burden falls on **Hiroki Kuroda**, whose personal inconsistency this season in many ways mirrors that of the team. Kuroda has lost three of four decisions this month and while his last outing wasn't terrible -- three earned runs in 5 1/3 innings against the Royals -- it was not nearly good enough when the Yankees' lineup was being shut down by **Felipe Paulino**.

Today, Kuroda draws LHP **Tommy Milone**, who has never faced the Yankees. That rarely works out well for them. But with the lineup suddenly starting to hit again, it is possible that this time, the Yankees and Kuroda will show a quality that has eluded them all season: the ability to win on a consistent, rather

than a sporadic basis.

**The Question:** After his big day Saturday, do you think **Mark Teixeira's** problems are behind him? Or was this a one-day extravaganza?

**Up now:** [My column on Teixeira's big day](#), blogs on **Derek Jeter's** rough day, **Robby Cano's** hitting surge, and **Joe Girardi's** cereal jones.

**Coming later:** Team reports a bit later today -- 10:15 a.m. Pacific time, 1:15 p.m. NY time -- for today's 4:05 p.m. start, so sleep a little later and start checking for blog items around that time. And as always, thanks for reading.

**Question No. 2:** When **David Robertson** comes back, do you think he should be the closer? Or should the Yankees stick with **Rafael Soriano**?



## Yankees' Eric Chavez hears boos in return to Oakland

Published: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 12:31 PM Updated: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 12:38 PM



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

OAKLAND -- Eric Chavez's framed photograph still hangs in the runway leading to the playing field here.

In June 2000, when he was still part of a franchise renaissance, Chavez became the first player in Oakland A's history to hit for the cycle at the Coliseum. The photo shows Chavez following through on a swing a swing that afternoon, one of many he took in his 13 seasons with the A's.

"It's a little weird," Chavez said yesterday, shortly after he walked past the photograph, while wearing the uniform of the Yankees.

As he expected, Chavez heard boos from the Coliseum crowd, while going 0-for-3 with a walk in what he called an "uneventful" first return to Oakland.

"They asked me the same thing when Jason (Giambi) left: What do you expect the fans to do?" Chavez said. "Well, he's playing for the Yankees. They'll boo him."

The A's had once pinned their hopes on Chavez, the chosen one of a group of talented players that pushed the Yankees to the brink in the 2000s, before finding free agent riches elsewhere. Giambi landed with the Yankees, Miguel Tejada wound up with the Orioles and Barry Zito took a lucrative deal to join the cross-Bay Yankees.

The cash-strapped A's, in position to retain just one of its star players, lavished upon Chavez a six-year, \$66 million extension in 2005. It was the last time he played a full season.

Injuries kept Chavez to playing just 154 games in his last four seasons in Oakland. Frustrated by his constant stints on the disabled list, Chavez considered retirement in 2011. He reconsidered, signing a minor-league deal with the Yankees, where he has been Alex Rodriguez's backup at third base.

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

When the Yankees made their only trip to Oakland last season, Chavez was on the disabled list with a foot injury. But when he played, Chavez remained productive, enticing the Yankees to bring him back for a second season. As a reserve, Chavez is hitting .293 with three homers and six RBI. He has also given manager Joe Girardi a reliable option off the bench to play third base, a position in which he once won six consecutive Gold Gloves while with the A's.

"I'll probably just try to keep my head down and focus on my job," Chavez said of his return.

Though the A's roster has seen plenty of turnover since 2010, Chavez spent much of his afternoon catching up with stadium staff and other team personnel, who remain with the club that chose him in the first round of the 1996 draft. Chavez's parents drove up from San Diego to watch him play. And at some point during the series, Chavez intends to spend time with his brother Casey, who is still the A's bullpen catcher.

Said Chavez: "It is odd."

Chavez said he still keeps tabs on the A's, who entered play last night at 22-23, overachieving despite a payroll of \$52.8 million.

"Kind of the same old story here in Oakland," said Chavez, an integral member of A's teams that reached the postseason in four straight seasons from 2000 to 2003.

Those teams never failed to advance past the first round. Twice, they were bounced by the Yankees, including in 2001 when Derek Jeter's flip play helped topple Chavez and the A's.

"They didn't practice that play, either," Chavez said with a smile, as Jeter dressed just two lockers away.

It was also Chavez's comments about the A's supplanting the Yankees as the powers of the American League that also helped the Yankees overcome a 2-0 deficit in the series.

Said Chavez: "We just fell short of what we tried to accomplish here."

The A's would have to beat the odds to approach even that level success again. That the A's still play in an outmoded venue is also the same old story in Oakland. Efforts to move the franchise to San Jose, where a new ballpark could be built, have been stalled by the Giants.

"That's unbelievable," Chavez said. "I don't really know what the hold up is. They really need a new venue. They needed one when I was here."



## **Bradley: After a series of bad starts, Yankees' Phil Hughes has eliminated mind games**

Published: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 10:28 PM Updated: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 10:38 PM



By **Jeff Bradley/Star-Ledger MLB Columnist**

Phil Hughes has been playing mind games for a while now.

Remember last year, when he swore he was healthy, but couldn't hit 90 mph on the gun? He figured it had to be a case of mind over matter, that the ball felt good coming out of his hand so he needed to keep trusting his fastball, until he was finally diagnosed with a fatigued shoulder.

When he came back from a long stint on the disabled list, even though he was back to throwing 92-94 mph, Hughes' mind was telling him he had to think like a starter, mix all his pitches, get the team deep into games. That led to a frustrating season, a 5-5 record, only 74% innings, and a spot in the bullpen for the postseason.

Which sent him into the off-season — and more thinking. Would he be a starter? A reliever? When he got into camp this spring, he was clearly a starter. Then, in mid-March, he learned that Andy Pettitte was coming back. More to think about. What would his role be?

"It's just part of the deal when you're a Yankee," Hughes said at the time, not complaining. "If it's not one thing, it's another. The only solution is to pitch well."

To start the season, Hughes was doing everything but pitching well. In four April starts, he only made it through five innings once. With every poor outing came reports from Pettitte's extended spring and minor-league outings. That's when Hughes says he played one more mind game with himself. Basically, be a starter, think like a reliever.

"Health more than anything is the difference between last year and this year," Hughes said. "You can have a big car with a small engine and think it's running fine. But when you drive a car with a bigger engine you're like, 'Okay, that's more powerful.' That's how it feels with my arm. I'm not trying to throw harder. But I am. That's health."

As for the beginning of the year to now, Hughes said, "That's more mind-set."

And as much as it would be neater, easier to say Hughes is just going at hitters more with fastballs, pounding the zone with strike one, he says it's more mental than that.

"More aggressive, trying to get back to the 2009 reliever mentality," Hughes said. "I'm going to try to stick with that, but know I can't get too fastball happy. It's preparation. It's saying to yourself, this is the attitude I'm going to take out there and stick with it. It's been a tough thing to do, but basically, I'm trying to be a reliever until I run out of gas."

In his last four starts, Hughes is 3-1 with a 2.81 ERA. He has struck out 23 and walked six in those four starts, pitching a total of 25 $\frac{1}{3}$  innings. After allowing four or more runs in four straight starts from April 14 to May 1, Hughes has not allowed more than two runs in his last three starts. The aggressive approach has led to one negative trend. Hughes has surrendered at least one home run in each of his nine starts.

"I am still learning how to be smart and use all your pitches, while keeping the aggressive mentality," said Hughes, who will get the ball tomorrow when the Yanks open a series with the Angels in Anaheim.

"It's a fine line. You want to bring the aggressive mind-set to the mound every inning, but also know the second and third time around the order, you're going to have to mix in your second, third and fourth pitches. So it's a mentality, but you also have to be smart with it. Believe me, it's all still a work in progress."

And obviously something Hughes continues to think about.



**Joel Sherman**

**Hardball**

**A**T THIS moment, even Brian Cashman considers his acquisition of Michael Pineda a disaster.

Cashman and the Yankees will hope this is only a snapshot and that the picture improves long term. In the present, however, Pineda (shoulder) is out for the season and José Campos (elbow) is on the disabled list. Jesus Montero (.252, six home runs) and Hector Noesi (2-5, 5.26 ERA) might not be excelling for the Mariners, but at least they are playing and potentially getting growing pains out of the way.

In the present, it also sparked another round of criticism of Cashman's trading acumen. So I figured I would try to separate fact from fiction by actually looking at his deals.

Cashman has been the general manager since 1998, but it was not until the end of April 2005, with the team in crisis, that George Steinbrenner empowered Cashman to act like a traditional head of baseball operations. It is not that he didn't make trades before both good (think David Justice) and bad (think Javier Vazquez). It was that prior to April 2005 he ebbed in and out of favor with the Boss, meaning there were times he made deals and times he had nothing whatsoever to do with what occurred with the Yankees.

As an example, prior to April 2005, Cashman had nothing to do with the acquisitions in free agency or trade of Randy Johnson, Gary Sheffield, Tony Womack and Jaret Wright. But after that date, it fell upon Cashman to deal each of their bad contracts.

April 2005 serves as a demarca-

# LIFE OF BRIAN

## A look at Cashman's track record as Yanks GM

tion in which all Yankee trades, at the least, went through an evaluation process established by Cashman — whether he ultimately was overruled by his bosses or not. So it is fairer in judging his skills to look at the trades that have occurred since. It is not like there is a paucity from which to select. The Yankees have made 53 trades in that time, and here are some items that stand out:

1. Cashman is a much better at the art of the trade than free agency.
2. His most consistently successful work has been finding in-season pieces to elevate contenders.
3. He has been very willing to use the farm system to add pieces.

What follows is not a breakdown of each of those trades. You would be surprised how many insignificant deals are completed (Eric Fryer for Chase Wright, anyone). Instead, here are the more consequential swaps. Keep in mind, we do not know every reason that went into a trade, most important we don't know what the Yankees might have been able to turn, say, Montero into elsewhere had they resisted Pineda. So with the best 20/20 hindsight at our disposal, we bring you:

### THE SUCCESSES

#### 1. THE IN-SEASON MARKET:

This is where Cashman has done his most consistently high-end dealing. In July 2005, the Yankees obtained **Shawn Chacon** from the Rockies for **Eduardo Sierra** and **Ramon Ramirez**. Ramirez has had some success for several organizations and is now a Met. A year later Cashman would deal Chacon to Pittsburgh for **Craig Wilson**, who was supposed to help vs. lefties, but didn't. However, the Yankees do not make the playoffs in 2005 without Chacon's 7-3, 2.85 ERA run.

The following July, Cashman knew Philadelphia was desperate to remove **Bobby Abreu's** dubious motor and big salary. He told the Phillies he would absorb the contract but only for essentially non-

prospects. He did that and got **Cory Lidle**, as well. Now, the Phillies actually became a better team without Abreu, but the lefty swinger produced an .843 OPS for the Yankees and helped for 2 1/2 years.

In July 2007, the Yankees made a small deal by sending **Jeff Kennard** to the Angels for **Jose Molina**. Molina became a valuable defensive component as a backup catcher, helping, in particular, shepherd **A.J. Burnett** through the 2009 championship season.

From June 30-Aug. 6, 2009, Cashman completed three deals in which he gave up almost nothing to obtain **Eric Hinske**, **Jerry Hairston Jr.**, and **Chad Gaudin**, a trio that helped add depth to a championship club.

The following July, Cashman gave up two non-

prospects to Cleveland for **Kerry Wood**, whose 0.69 ERA in 24 appearances helped get the Yankees to the playoffs.

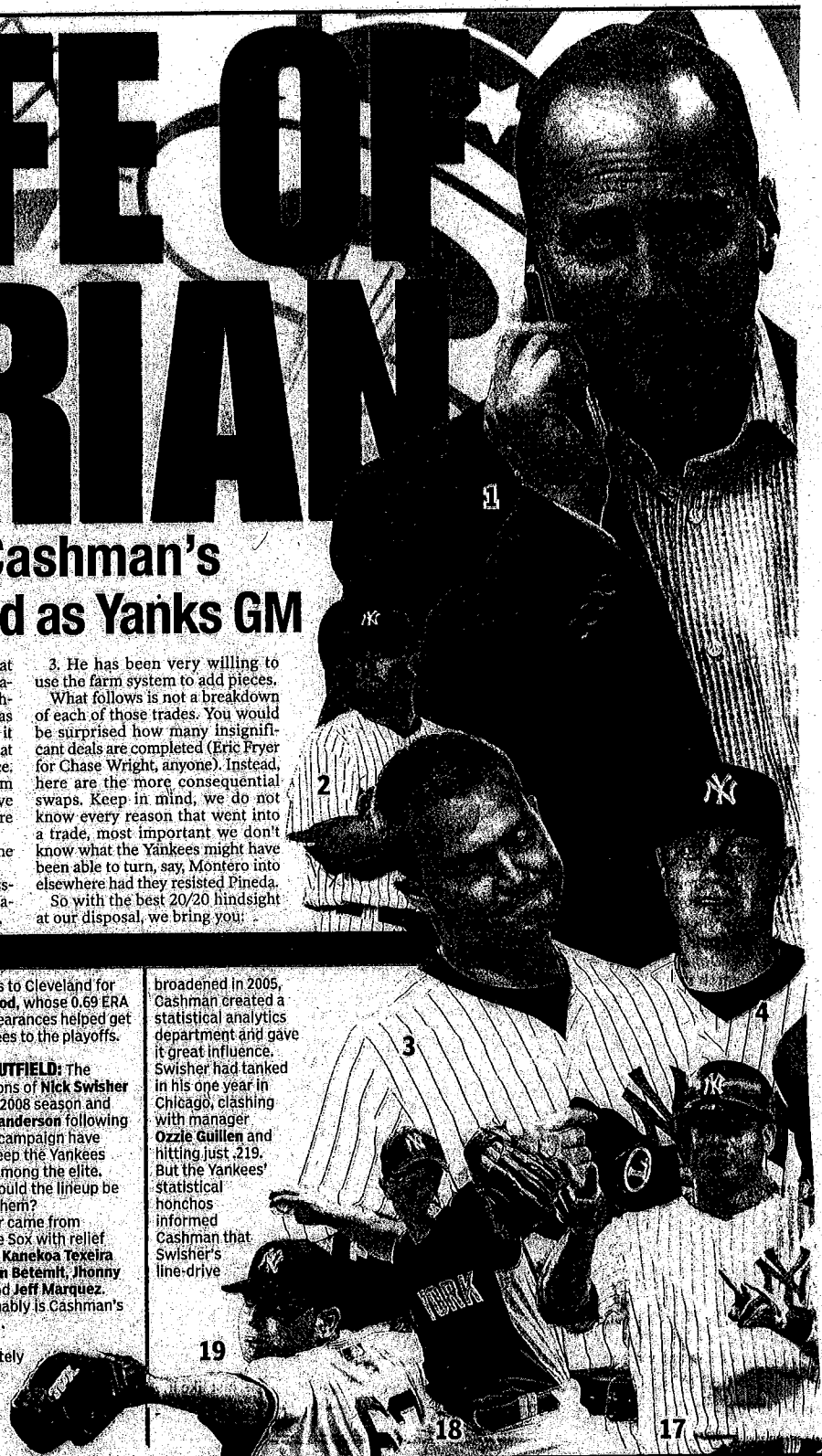
#### 2. THE OUTFIELD:

The acquisitions of **Nick Swisher** after the 2008 season and **Curtis Granderson** following the 2009 campaign have helped keep the Yankees offense among the elite. Where would the lineup be without them?

Swisher came from the White Sox with relief prospect **Kanekoa Texeira** for **Wilson Betemit**, **Jhonny Nunez** and **Jeff Marquez**. This arguably is Cashman's best deal.

Almost immediately upon having his powers

broadened in 2005, Cashman created a statistical analytics department and gave it great influence. Swisher had tanked in his one year in Chicago, clashing with manager **Ozzie Guillen** and hitting just .219. But the Yankees' statistical honchos informed Cashman that Swisher's line-drive





percentage and hitting eye had remained consistent with his successful seasons. His batting average for balls in play, however, had fallen way below the league average, which suggested he just had been unlucky and was, thus, a strong candidate to rebound, especially since he still was in his prime.

Swisher has his foibles, notably his postseason struggles. But his .847 OPS since 2009 was 34th in the majors (minimum 1,500 plate appearances), making him a great buy considering the low cost.

Conversely, the cost for Granderson was steep: **Ian Kennedy** to Arizona and **Phil Coke** and **Austin Jackson** to Detroit in one of the most successful-for-all-parties three-way trades in history. Granderson has honored the Yankees' vision that

his lefty stroke was made for their stadium: His 79 homers since the trade lead the team.

## THE FAILURES

**THE WORST:** Until the results are fully in on the Pineda deal, Cashman's biggest mistake may have come in a small maneuver: On Dec. 4, 2007, the Yankees shipped **Tyler Clippard** to Washington for **Jonathan Albaladejo**. Since becoming a full-time reliever in 2009, Clippard has emerged as one of the most durable/excellent set-up men in the majors (he is closing now because of injuries in the Nationals' bullpen). Since 2009, he has a 2.56 ERA, has averaged 10.6 strikeouts per nine innings and has a .185 batting average against, fourth best among pitchers with 150 appearances (Mariano Rivera's is .198).

Now, pitching for the Yankees and in the AL East is different. **Mark Melancon**, traded to Houston for **Lance Berkman** in July 2010, had 20 saves for the Astros last year but blew up for the Red Sox this season and was demoted to Triple-A. Still, Clippard's success compared to Albaladejo's brief (49 games) and unmemorable stint makes this a regrettable deal by Cashman.

**THE JAVY VAZQUEZ INFATUATION:** Although Vazquez's initial acquisition by the Yankees pre-dates April 2005, Cashman certainly was a key figure in the December 2003 deal with Montreal for

**Nick Johnson, Juan Rivera and Randy Choate.**

Vazquez's initial pinstripe calamity (specifically as one of the villains of the 2004 ALCS collapse against Boston) compounds Cashman's mistake in obtaining the righty yet again in December 2009. Cashman was convinced Vazquez could mentally handle New York in his second tour and provide desperately needed quality innings. But Vazquez's return was worse than his debut, and his combined 5.09 ERA in 58 starts is the fifth worst in team history (minimum 50 starts).

Now the mitigating factors: The Yankees did get **Boone Logan**, as well, and Logan has turned into the team's most dependable lefty reliever since **Mike Stanton's** heyday.

Also, the one player Atlanta had to get in return to make the deal, pitching prospect **Aroldys Vizcaino**, needed Tommy John surgery and is missing this year. But Vizcaino was the kind of touted prospect for which the

Yankees almost certainly could have done far better than Vazquez. In addition, looking to fill center field and leadoff, the Braves would have accepted either **Melky Cabrera** or **Brett Gardner** in return. Now, who knows

how history plays out? Cabrera infuriated the Braves by being out of shape and playing poorly after the season, and Cabrera responded by getting into elite shape and, over the past two years for Kansas City and now San Francisco, he has a .318 average and has become an above-average player. Would he have gotten into that shape immediately for the Yankees and been more valuable overall than Gardner?

**STAR DISPOSAL:** Again, Cashman had nothing to do with the acquisitions of Johnson (Vazquez was part of the deal to Arizona) or Sheffield. But he believed he was obtaining useful pieces for the future in dealing both, and that did not really work out.

In November 2006, desperate to remove Sheffield's salary and temperament, the Yankees believed they might be getting from Detroit a closer of the future in **Humberto Sanchez** and two other useful bullpen pieces in **Anthony Cleggett** and **Kevin Whelan**.

It marked the second time Cashman had done high-level business with Tigers GM Dave Dombrowski for three prospects and the second time Cashman struck out. In February 1999 — in a trade Cashman very much

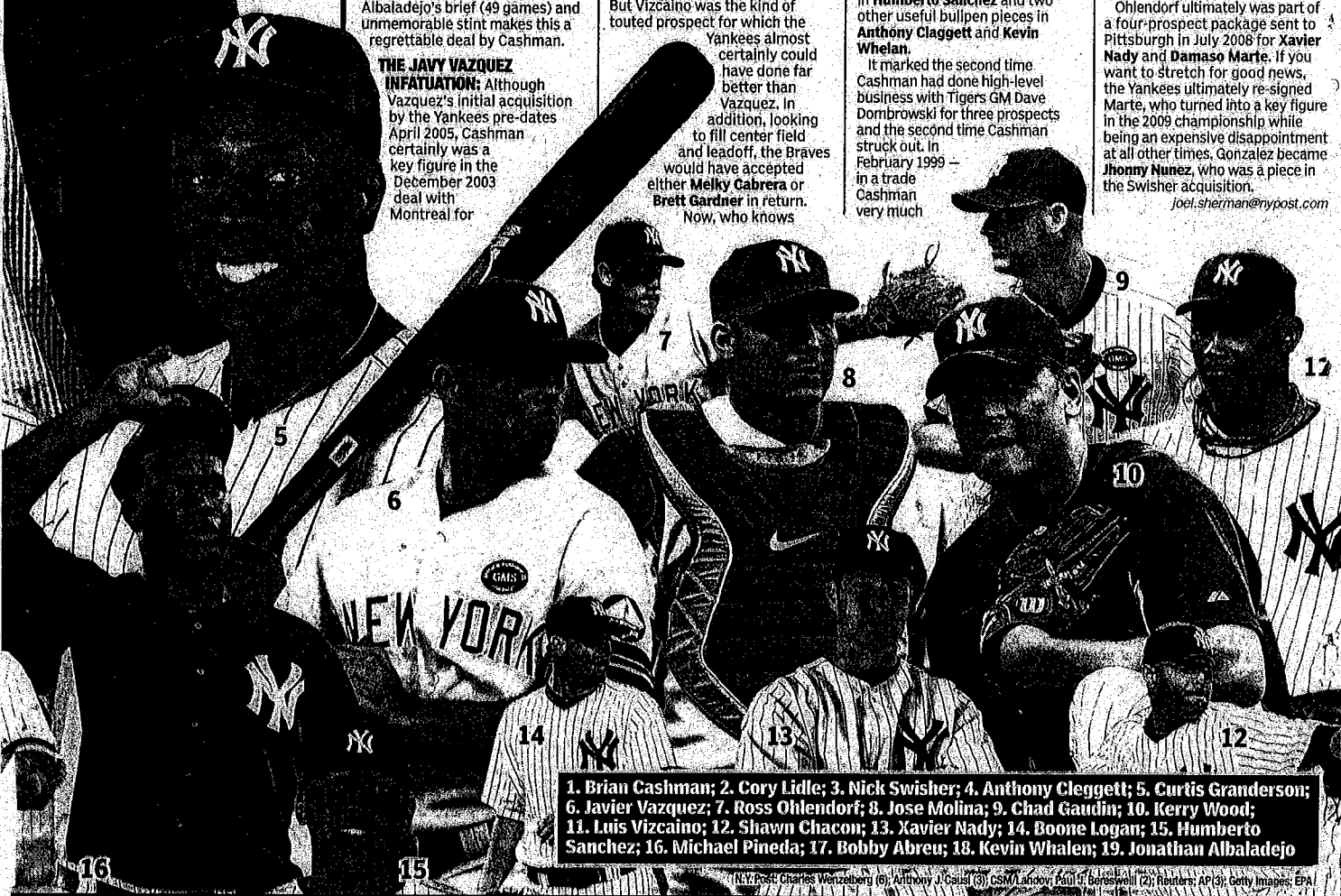
avored — **Mike Lowell** was dealt to Florida (Dombrowski was then the Marlins GM) for **Ed Yarnall, Todd Noel** and **Mark Johnson**. Yarnall and Noel, in particular, were craved by the Yankees. Neither panned out, though there was a potentially destructive moment in 1999 when some in the organization thought Yarnall would outperform **Andy Pettitte** and that Pettitte should be traded.

Cashman also was a motivating factor in a three-way trade that included Dombrowski's Tigers in July 2002 in which he surrendered **Ted Lilly** and two prospects for **Jeff Weaver**, who failed as a Yankee.

In January 2007, for **Randy Johnson**, the Yankees obtained **Luis Vizcaino**, **Steven Jackson**, **Ross Ohlendorf** and **Alberto Gonzalez**. Vizcaino represents the last overtaxed Yankees set-up man under **Joe Torre**, appearing in 77 games in 2007 and just 58 thereafter with a 4.99 ERA.

Ohlendorf ultimately was part of a four-prospect package sent to Pittsburgh in July 2008 for **Xavier Nady** and **Damaso Marte**. If you want to stretch for good news, the Yankees ultimately re-signed Marte, who turned into a key figure in the 2009 championship while being an expensive disappointment at all other times. Gonzalez became **Jhonny Nunez**, who was a piece in the Swisher acquisition.

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1. Brian Cashman; 2. Cory Lidle; 3. Nick Swisher; 4. Anthony Cleggett; 5. Curtis Granderson; 6. Javier Vazquez; 7. Ross Ohlendorf; 8. Jose Molina; 9. Chad Gaudin; 10. Kerry Wood; 11. Luis Vizcaino; 12. Shawn Chacon; 13. Xavier Nady; 14. Boone Logan; 15. Humberto Sanchez; 16. Michael Pineda; 17. Bobby Abreu; 18. Kevin Whalen; 19. Jonathan Albaladejo

(NY Post: Charles Wenzelberg (6); Anthony J. Cella (3); CSMA/Andrew Hall (1); Corteswell (2); Reuters/AP (3); Getty Images/EPA



Saturday, May 26, 2012

## Monday a big day for Gardner

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**Brett Gardner** is scheduled to swing a bat on Monday, and if all goes well, he could be on the fast track back to Yankee Stadium.

If not? "If we have another setback, we're probably looking at the All-Star break," **Joe Girardi** said on Saturday.

Gardner has played in only nine games this season after going on the disabled list on April 18 with what was originally described as a bone bruise on his right elbow suffered while diving for a ball in left field, but morphed into a right elbow strain after a setback during his rehab assignment.

Gardner's absence has been cited by Girardi as one reason for the Yankees' difficulty scoring runs this season, and without him in the lineup, the team leader in stolen bases is **Alex Rodriguez** with six.

"I don't think it should take too long," Girardi said of Gardner's return assuming he is pain-free on Monday. "But I think you've got to see him play in a game before you really know. So we've got to make sure there's nothing, no pressure, not a little bit of swelling, nothing, before we bring him back."



Saturday, May 26, 2012

## Joe Girardi: Cereal killer

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If you've ever wondered what baseball writers talk to the manager about the morning after a night game, the answer is, pretty much nothing, because nothing much has changed in the eight or nine hours since you've both left the ballpark.

So this morning **Joe Girardi** decided to discuss his breakfast. At length.

At first, he disclosed that he had left a half-eaten bowl of Honey Nut Cheerios behind to hold his pregame interview session, a choice he made after agonizing over choosing them or Fruit Loops.

Over time, he revealed that he normally eats his cereal dry because of his lactose intolerance, that he also likes Lucky Charms, and that he only allows his kids to eat cereal on weekends.

But the most shocking revelation was that the Girardi family feasted on free Cap'n Crunch "for like a year" after a train carrying the cereal derailed somewhere on the property of the farm his mother grew up on in Peoria, Illinois, spilling its precious cargo, when Girardi was about seven or eight years old.

"We had so much Captain Crunch over the next year, it was amazing," Girardi said. "To this day, I still like Captain Crunch."

This conversation actually happened, and if Quaker Oats has been wondering what happened to all that Cap'n Crunch back in 1971 or 1972, consider the mystery solved.

This conversation actually happened.

Updated May 26, 2012, 3:31 p.m. ET

Yankees manager Joe Girardi craves sugar cereal

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Joe Girardi recalls being about 8 when a train derailed behind his grandparents' farm and left enough stray boxes of Cap'n Crunch cereal to feed him and his four siblings for a full year.

What a treat that became. The kids typically only got sugar cereal on the weekends, but this was the exception.

"It was the only year we got sugar cereals during the week," Girardi said Saturday, teasing the media that they had interrupted his morning cereal ritual.

These days, Girardi is lactose intolerant, so the New York Yankees manager often snacks on the sugary cereals sans milk during road trips considering most visiting clubhouses don't keep a lactose-free variety in the fridge.

"My mother lived on a farm when she was growing up and behind the farm was a train track," the New York Yankees manager said Saturday. "When I was a kid my mom's family still basically owned the house. A train derailed and one of the cars was full of Cap'n Crunch. We had so much Cap'n Crunch over the next year it was amazing. To this day I still like Cap'n Crunch. It's rough on the roof of your mouth."

He insists he only needs a handful to get his fix.

"Most of my cereal I put protein powder on," he said.

But he still loves to treat himself with a bowl of Cap'n Crunch, Cocoa Puffs, Lucky Charms or Honey Nut Cheerios — the latter being his choice before Saturday afternoon's middle game against the Oakland Athletics.

Girardi said he doesn't remember whether the owner of all that cereal ever came looking for the Cap'n Crunch, which his uncles packed back to the house.

"I don't know what happened. I didn't ask questions. I was like 8 years old," he said. "It was all Cap'n Crunch, the regular, no berries. We had a lot. It lasted a year in our house and there were five of us."



## Legally blind Hamilton boy is determined to play baseball after gift from Andy Pettitte

Published: Sunday, May 27, 2012, 7:56 AM Updated: Sunday, May 27, 2012, 7:57 AM



By Paul Franklin/For The Times

**HAMILTON** — Marc and Jill Fass learned long ago that life doesn't always go as planned. Recently, they were reminded that can be a good thing.

Last month, for example, they planned to attend a Trenton Thunder game to hear their daughter Katie's name announced in honor of an academic award she had won. But it happened that Yankee Andy Pettitte would be playing that night and tickets were hard to come by.

In the next unexpected turn, generous season ticket-holders gave the couple and their two children choice front-row tickets, right next to the Thunder dugout. On top of that, the star pitcher briefly but memorably entered the life of their 5-year-old son, also named Andy.

"A bunch of people were crowded around us as Pettitte came off the field from warm-ups, all wanting autographs and taking pictures," Marc Fass recalled. "All of a sudden, he walks by us and hands the baseball to our Andy and continues on his merry way."

"My son immediately turns around to me and says, 'What's this?' I said, 'Andy, it's a baseball.' We put it in our backpack right away before he had a chance to throw it back on the field," Marc said.

The boy didn't initially realize he was holding a baseball because he has oculocutaneous albinism. Andy is legally blind, and his parents learned soon after he was born that he would not be able to play baseball — though things may work out differently, thanks in part to that night at Waterfront Park.

The evening continued to be memorable. A family friend waited in line after the game and had Pettitte sign the ball. And, by coincidence, The Times captured the moment the pitcher handed the ball to Andy in a photo that appeared on the front page the next day.

Andy's mom e-mailed the Thunder to thank them for a night that turned out to be more special than they could have imagined, and the public relations department found the story so poignant that it forwarded her letter to the Yankees. Soon two Yankee baseball caps arrived in the mail.

Then something even more exciting arrived.

Stepping up to the plate this time was the kids' gymnastics coach, Rebecca Harcar, a YMCA youth development director. She offered father and son two tickets to a Yankees game — the Sunday Pettitte made his return to the big leagues.

"We used to be Phillies fans," said Marc, a licensed optician at Robert Wood Johnson in Hamilton. "Now we're Yankee fans."

### **"He'll never play baseball"**

When her son was born, Jill, who works in the emergency room at Hunterdon Medical Center, knew something was wrong almost immediately.

"He never looked at me," she recalled recently during a visit to Veterans Park, as Andy and 7-year-old Katie played nearby. "We took him to the doctor and we were told he had ocular albinism. I went home and looked it up and basically he was going to be blind."

"It was heart-wrenching," she said. "He was officially diagnosed at four months."

Albinism is a genetic condition that causes a lack of pigment. It can affect only the eyes or both the eyes and skin. Andy has both, a condition labeled OCA1b.

"When we were told about his condition, we went home and read two things. One, he'll never play baseball; two, he'll never drive," his father said. "We're talking months of tears."

An energetic youngster, Andy's demeanor is reminiscent of the boy in the movie "Jerry McGuire," the child of Renee Zellweger's character. Engaging, inquisitive and tender, he is simply fun to be around. And he loves swimming and gymnastics.

"He's very funny, very silly, and some days very crazy," his sister said with a giggle.

"We call him the mayor," his mom said.

In June, he can be called a baseball player. After his front-row seat at the Thunder game, the hand-off from Pettitte and the day at the Yankees game, Andy made it clear he was hooked.

Next month he will give T-ball a try, indoors at the YMCA.

"Next year, when he's older, I'll let him try baseball outside. He wants to do it, and I'm not gonna stop him," his mother said. "Some (albinism) parents won't let their child do anything. Mine, he has no fear, to a point."

As she spoke, Andy went from pushing a kid on a swing to running to sit on the playground's seesaw. It was 5 p.m. and the day's shadows were lengthening, yet Andy continued to wear a hat and sunglasses.

### **Blessed with support**

Recently, the family has received encouraging news. After an eye exam, a doctor told them there is a good chance that it will be possible for Andy to drive.

"Indications are that there won't be as many limits as once thought," Jill said. "We've already knocked playing ball off the bucket list. We can't wait to see what the future may hold."

The family has benefitted from years of support, especially from families they have met through the National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation. According to the group's website, 1 in 40,000 people worldwide have Andy's condition.

"One day I said to Jill, 'Where would we be if we didn't have the albinism?'" Marc said. "Without skipping a beat she said, 'We'd have a lot fewer friends.'"

"We're blessed, we really are," his wife said. "We have met so many wonderful people. We're very lucky. While his condition won't improve, thanks to therapists he will continue to learn to fully utilize what vision he has. He can see, but not clearly."

Andy will be mainstreamed into an elementary school in September, where he will need special pencils dark enough for him to see and a monocular to help him see the blackboard. He will need large print throughout his school career, his mother said.

Depth perception is an issue, and eventually he will likely need a cane to help him get around.

"He has a cane," said Jill, pausing to smile. "But mostly he uses it as a sword."

No doubt now he'll use it as a bat. For Andy, there's a new game in town. A new team, too.



# Box Seats



Don Larsen says he's trying to raise college money.

## Up for Bid, A Piece Of Perfection

### Larsen Selling Uniform To Aid His Grandsons

By VINCENT M. MALLOZZI

Once upon a perfect game, Yogi Berra leapt into Don Larsen's arms.

Their World Series celebration took place Oct. 8, 1956, at the dramatic conclusion of Game 5 against the Brooklyn Dodgers at Yankee Stadium. Larsen, a strapping right-hander, retired all 27 Dodgers he faced, striking out seven, including pinch-hitter Dale Mitchell, who looked at a third strike to end the 2-0 Yankees victory.

Larsen, who remains the only pitcher to throw a perfect game in the World Series, will soon be auctioning the jersey and pants he wore that day. If the \$565,000 auction price for the jersey and pants that Berra wore that day is any indication of what Larsen's uniform might fetch, the next to leap into Larsen's arms will be his two grandsons.

"I'm auctioning the uniform to provide my grandsons with enough money for a college education," Larsen, 82, said Friday in a telephone interview from his home in Hayden Lake, Idaho. "What the uniform actually sells for is not that important to me; whatever happens, happens. I'm just hoping for enough to help the grandkids."

Larsen and his sports marketing agent, Andrew Levy of Wish You Were Here Productions, have consigned the uniform to Steiner Sports Marketing, which is set to run an online auction for 56 days, from Oct. 8, the 56th anniversary of the perfect game, to Dec. 2, at steinersports.com.

"I really don't know what it is worth," Larsen said. "But what I do know is that in terms of historic importance, my uniform is a part of one of the greatest moments in the history of sports. I have thought about that perfect game, more than once a day, every day of my life since the day I threw it."

"It was a moment in time that changed my life," said Larsen, who had an 81-91 record with seven teams over 14 seasons. "That one game has helped me tremendously over the years with paid appearances at card shows, conventions, all sorts of things."

Larsen said that all the Yankees received new uniforms for the 1956 Series. He had worn his once before, in Game 2 against the Dodgers, who chased Larsen after he allowed four runs in one and two-thirds innings in a 13-8 loss. The Yankees won the Series in seven games.

"The uniform never got dirty because I didn't wear it very long," Larsen said. "It's still in beautiful condition. I will miss it when it goes because I have a whole lifetime of memories wrapped up in it."

Long before the sports memorabilia craze, most players placed only sentimental value on milestone bats, baseballs and uniforms. The scar-



The uniform that Yogi Berra wore during Don Larsen's 1956 World Series perfect game brought \$565,000 at auction. Larsen said his uniform was worn in two games of the Series.

city of such items raises their value in today's market. Look no further than the Babe Ruth Yankees road jersey from 1920 that sold this month at auction for \$4.4 million, a record for a sports artifact.

"While the Babe Ruth jersey was worn at some point by the greatest baseball player of all time, the uniform worn by Don Larsen is part of arguably the greatest single achievement in the history of sports," Levy said. "It is certainly a part of one of the most iconic moments in Yankees history."

Larsen, who said he "saved everything I could possibly save from my career," auctioned the cap, gloves, shoes and last-out baseball from his perfect game in 2002. They sold for \$120,750. But those items were bronzed, and most memorabilia experts say that bronzing devalues a memento.

"That money was also put into a trust for my grandkids," said Larsen, who added that the most he made in a season was \$20,000 with the Houston Colt 45s in 1964.

Unfortunately for Berra, he did not save the uniform he wore while catching Larsen's perfect game. Instead, he tossed it into a laundry basket, and it circulated around the Yankees clubhouse for three years until it was given to Ron Stevenot, a 17-year-old from Long Island, to wear for a tryout. Stevenot, who kept it for more than 50 years, placed it in auction two years ago.

Dr. Richard Angrist, a memorabilia collector, bought the uniform and lent it to the Yogi Berra Museum and Learning Center on the Montclair State University campus in Little Falls, N.J.

"Having Don's uniform next to mine, which the doctor gave us, would be real nice," Berra said Friday. "That would be pretty fitting."

# FOXSPORTS.COM

## Report: Don Larsen to sell WS uniform

**NewsCore**

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UPDATED MAY 27, 2012 2:33 AM ET

Former Yankee Don Larsen -- the only man to pitch a perfect game in a World Series -- is putting his uniform from that historic day in 1956 up for sale to help fund his two grandsons' college education.

On Oct. 8, 1956, Larsen retired all 27 Brooklyn Dodgers he faced, striking out seven as New York won Game 5 at Yankee Stadium on the way to winning the series in seven games.

As an indication of what the jersey and pants might be worth, the uniform Larsen's teammate Yogi Berra wore that day sold for \$565,000 at auction.

"I'm auctioning the uniform to provide my grandsons with enough money for a college education," Larsen told The New York Times in a telephone interview from his home in Hayden Lake, Idaho.

"What the uniform actually sells for is not that important to me. Whatever happens, happens. I'm just hoping for enough to help the grandkids."

Larsen, 82, and his sports marketing agent have consigned the uniform to Steiner Sports Marketing, which is set to hold an online auction from Oct. 8 -- the 56th anniversary of the perfect game -- to Dec. 2.

"I really don't know what it is worth," Larsen said. "But what I do know is that in terms of historic importance, my uniform is a part of one of the greatest moments in the history of sports. I have thought about that perfect game more than once a day, every day of my life since the day I threw it.

"It was a moment in time that changed my life," he added. "That one game has helped me tremendously over the years with paid appearances at card shows, conventions, all sorts of things."

Larsen, a right-hander, had an 81-91 record with seven teams over 14 seasons. He was named World Series MVP in 1956.



Friday, May 25, 2012

## Championship effort in Clemens trial

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By Lester Munson  
ESPN.com

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- There is no World Series for crime fighters and defense lawyers, but if there were, it would look a lot like the Roger Clemens perjury trial. It has featured both brilliant plays and embarrassing errors, and it's heading for a seventh game that will likely go into extra innings.

The team representing the U.S. government includes five prosecutors, at least three federal agents and a couple of techies. Its leader is Steven Durham, a seasoned and talented lawyer. The Clemens defense team includes another five lawyers, three top-of-the-line investigators, a pair of techies and a group of paralegals and interns. Its leader is Rusty Hardin, one of America's greatest trial lawyers.

These formidable litigation teams spent nearly six hours on Thursday and Friday battling over two cotton balls and a used syringe. It's typical of the extensive and endless efforts from both sides that have added significantly to the length and the expense of the trial that will determine whether Clemens lied to the U.S. Congress when he denied use of performance-enhancing drugs.

The issue on Friday was the presence of Clemens' DNA on the cotton balls and the syringe. In a garden-variety trial of a criminal case involving DNA on three objects, the questioning of the DNA witness might have consumed no more than 90 minutes, or at the long end, two hours.

But with the extensive preparations that both teams have made for this trial, both sides have asked every possible question, have raised every possible legal issue, and have sought every advantage in every answer from every witness.

In the battle over the DNA evidence, for example, Assistant U.S. Attorney Courtney Saleski took DNA expert Alan Keel through every detail of the laboratory processing of 11 needles, gauze pads, tissues and vials that former Clemens trainer Brian McNamee claims he collected while he was injecting Clemens with steroids and HGH. Again and again, Saleski asked for each step of the procedure, never once suggesting that the procedure for one item was exactly the same as the procedure for the previous item.

Saleski demonstrated impressive mastery of DNA arcana, and she was trying to anticipate what the Clemens team would ask the expert in cross-examination.

When it was time for Michael Attanasio to cross-examine the expert, he returned the favor. He raised the possibilities of commingling and contamination of evidence, confronted the witness with tests he did not do, asked whether the witness was being paid by the hour, inquired about the possible transfer of evidence from one item to another while confined in a beer can where McNamee stashed them, focused on the expert's college major of zoology, and raised the possibility of saliva in the beer can.

The defense lawyer's finest moment came when he confronted Keel with the fact that Keel's calculations show that there was a 1-in-450 chance that someone else had the same DNA that Keel found on the needle and attributed to Clemens. It was a marked contrast to the numbers for one of the cotton balls that showed a 1-in-1.8 quintillion chance that DNA from someone other than Clemens was on the cotton ball.

Although neither Keel nor Attanasio made the calculation, it means that there are as many as 6,667 people in the United States whose DNA would match the DNA that Keel found on the needle.

Saleski's finest moment came in her questions responding to Attanasio's cross-examination, when she said to the expert: "I want to ask you some questions about pus." She then did exactly what she said she would do, asking him a series of six questions about the pus that he found on one of the cotton balls that he attributed to Clemens.

As the two teams have battled over every detail in the case, U.S. District Court Judge Reggie Walton has expressed his frustration over the extensive questioning of witnesses, frequently interrupting the questions and asking the lawyers to "move on to something important." He told both sides that their questions to any single witness could not go beyond 90 minutes, but both sides violated his guidance with their interrogations of Keel, without a word of criticism from the judge.

The battle between these two power-packed lineups will continue for another couple of weeks. The prosecutors are nearing the end of their presentation of evidence, and then the Clemens team will have its turn at bat.

Hardin has promised to offer witnesses who will demonstrate that Clemens' physique did not change during the time McNamee claims to have injected him with PEDs, that it would be easy for McNamee to have fabricated the physical evidence, that Clemens' 24-year career was consistent and showed no improvement as the result of steroids, and that the government has spent an inordinate amount of time and money on its prosecution of Clemens.

It's the kind of defense that Hardin can present with a client like Clemens who is willing to invest a good portion of his wealth to try to preserve a piece of his legacy.

Although these lawyers have all been involved in other big cases, there is little doubt that both sides are viewing this trial as a career event. Both are carefully attending to every detail. Both are working overtime, filing papers late in the evening and in the early morning hours. And, like teams in a World Series, both are looking for anything that will give them a victory.

# Healthy Dose Of Optimism In Shutout By Santana

By ANDREW KEH

On a warm Saturday afternoon at Citi Field, the San Diego Padres became Johan Santana's playthings.

He teased them with changeups that made them lose their footing. He taunted them with fastballs that zipped maddeningly close to the boundaries of the strike zone.

He toyed with the Padres, a largely unaccomplished band of hitters, for a little over two hours, and when his leisurely afternoon came to an end, he was left with these results: a 9-0 win, his first shutout victory since Aug. 12, 2010, and the clearest signal yet that his surgically repaired left shoulder had been revitalized.

"Now he knows that he's completely healthy," said Terry Collins, the Mets' manager. "He's so special. It's



JIM McISAAC/GETTY IMAGES

Johan Santana threw 96 pitches and put any shoulder concerns to rest.

incredible."

Santana worked with ease and efficiency, at one point retiring 16 batters in a row. He required just 96 pitches to finish the game, and 74 of them were strikes. He did not issue a walk and possibly did not break a sweat.

The Padres swung eagerly, but to no avail. They floated balls into the air and scythed them into the ground.

They cobbled together four hits, all of them weak singles, and struck out seven times.

They were thoroughly outclassed by a pitcher with two Cy Young Awards, although he began the season engulfed in doubt as he returned from a career-threatening surgical procedure 20 months ago.

Continued on Page 3

## In Shutout, a Robust Dose of Optimism

From First Sports Page

Two hours and 18 minutes after the first pitch, Yonder Alonso dribbled a ball to the right of the mound. Santana picked it up, held out both hands to tag Alonso on the chest for the 27th out, then dismissed him with a smile and a pat on the backside.

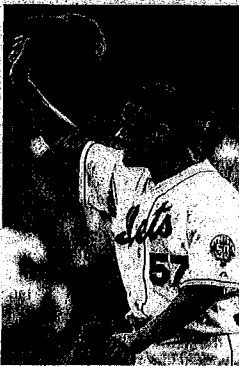
Afterward, Santana beamed as he considered the importance of his performance.

"It's a great feeling for me just to put my uniform on and be a part of my team," Santana said. "And now, being able to help and being able to go out there every five games is definitely something I've been waiting for and I'm very happy for."

The aura of revival permeated the game, creating a satisfying afternoon for the fans at Citi Field. With two men on base in the first, Scott Hairston sent a fastball from Clayton Richard crashing off the old, towering wall in left field and bouncing into the new viewing deck there, putting the Mets ahead, 3-0.

One out later, Vinny Rottino, a 32-year-old playing in just his 32nd major league game, drilled another ball into the same seating area to put the Mets up by four. The home run was the first of Rottino's career, and he said afterward that he felt he was "just kind of floating around the bases."

The good feelings continued in the eighth, when Ike Davis, who has been mired in a slump since the start of the season, entered as



Johan Santana averaged 89 miles per hour with his fastball, but his changeup baffled the Padres on Saturday.

a pinch-hitter and shot a run-scoring double into the gap in left-center field. The hit raised Davis's average to .173, and earned him an ovation from the crowd.

Later in the inning, Mike Nicketas blasted a grand slam, the first of his career, into the new seats in left field. Before the game, Collins expressed confidence that Nicketas, who started the day with a .080 average this season at Citi Field, would begin to improve at the plate.

"I've struggled here at home hitting a little bit, so it was a tremendous feeling for me to be able to do something just to kind of get

the weight off my shoulders," Nicketas said. "Hopefully, now I can relax and go."

But Nicketas said his home run was really only "the icing" on the afternoon. He and his teammates were consumed with admiration for Santana.

Collins had raved this year about Santana's work ethic and the influence he has had on a team filled with young players. Now, Collins had a marvelous performance to cite as well.

The average speed of Santana's fastball on Saturday was 89 miles per hour, yet he got the Padres to whiff at eight of them because of the tantalizing effect of his changeup, which averaged 77 m.p.h. He lowered his earned run average to 2.75, and gave the Mets a solid assurance that they could begin to loosen the reins they have placed upon him.

"He's been an ace his whole career," Collins said. "Just because he doesn't have the 96-mile-an-hour fastball anymore doesn't mean he can't still be an ace."

Santana had done this before, making opponents look foolish in his eight previous career shutouts. But after all he has been through, this one may have been the most significant.

### INSIDE PITCH

JERRY MEJIA, a 24-year-old right-hander, will make his first start for the Mets' Class AAA team in Buffalo in more than a year. Mejia, who had Tommy John elbow surgery in May 2011, eventually could be used out of the Mets' bullpen.

NY Times 5/27/12

# BASEBALL

By Bill Madden

# MAKING IT WRIGHT

## Mets must convince David they're building a winner, then lock him up

**M**uch as everyone in Metville would like to see a happy (lifelong) ending in this tip-toe, tap dance between David Wright and the Wilpons, there are significant reasons why they're proceeding so cautiously — reasons that don't figure to be resolved any time soon.

When Wright says, as he has so often, that he wants to experience what it is like to win, the Mets owners as well as the Citi Field faithful should pay heed. For this, and not the security of a long-term, big bucks contract, is the All-Star third baseman's top priority. And if you really want to know where Wright is going to be come 2014, you would be better off keeping a close eye on Ike Davis, Lucas Duda, Kirk Nieuwenhuis, Bobby Parnell, Ruben Tejada, Josh Thole, Dillon Gee — and just below the major league surface, Matt Harvey and Zack Wheeler — the rest of this year. They are the core players whose performance will help determine just how promising the Mets' future is in terms of Wright committing himself to a lifetime career here. Is Davis a one-year wonder, or is this so-far miserable season of his somehow attributable to Valley Fever or other physical ailments that can be rectified by making adjustments and fighting through the mental aspects?

Is Duda going to be a legitimate 25-plus homer guy? Because if it's determined he isn't, he's a liability in the outfield, and a significant upgrade is going to be needed there. Throughout his career, Nieuwenhuis has shown himself to be a high average hitter with limited power. If that's what he is, then he's no better than a No. 4 outfielder and, again, the Mets are going to need to find a power outfield bat, either on the free agent market (Melky Cabrera?) or by the trade route because there's no one of that ilk coming in the farm system.

Assuming Thole continues to progress as a capable first-string catcher, the Mets still need to find a backup who can provide a little pop, Mike Nickeas and his .160 batting average are symbolic of the corners-cutting the Mets hierarchy made this year as part of the \$50 million payroll purge. Similarly, the Mets are going to need to spend some money upgrading the bullpen from this season's patchwork of Frank Francisco and Jon Rauch — and hope that Bobby Parnell's gradual evolution to the back end will prove successful.

What is somewhat ironic about the Mets' surprising over-.500 play these eight weeks is, from Terry Collins on down, everyone has maintained that, Wright aside, it has largely been pitching-driven. And yet, going into the weekend, the Mets' staff ranked 15th in the NL in ERA (4.60) and tied for sixth in quality starts (26). While most would agree Johan Santana, R.A. Dickey and Jonathon Niese have provided quality at the top of the rotation, down the road — soon — the Mets are going to need Harvey and Wheeler to add their power arms to the mix if they are going to successfully go head-to-head with the Washington Nationals and their deep rotation.

"The Mets have a lot of interesting young pieces that may or may not turn out to be quality major league players," assessed one National League scout. "The jury's still out on all of them. Last year, before he got hurt, I really liked Davis. Now I'm not so sure. Duda can hit the ball a ton but he's got holes that good pitchers expose. He's going to have to keep making adjustments."

"I love Parnell's arm, but don't know about his makeup. I would say this season is going to be telling about all of them."

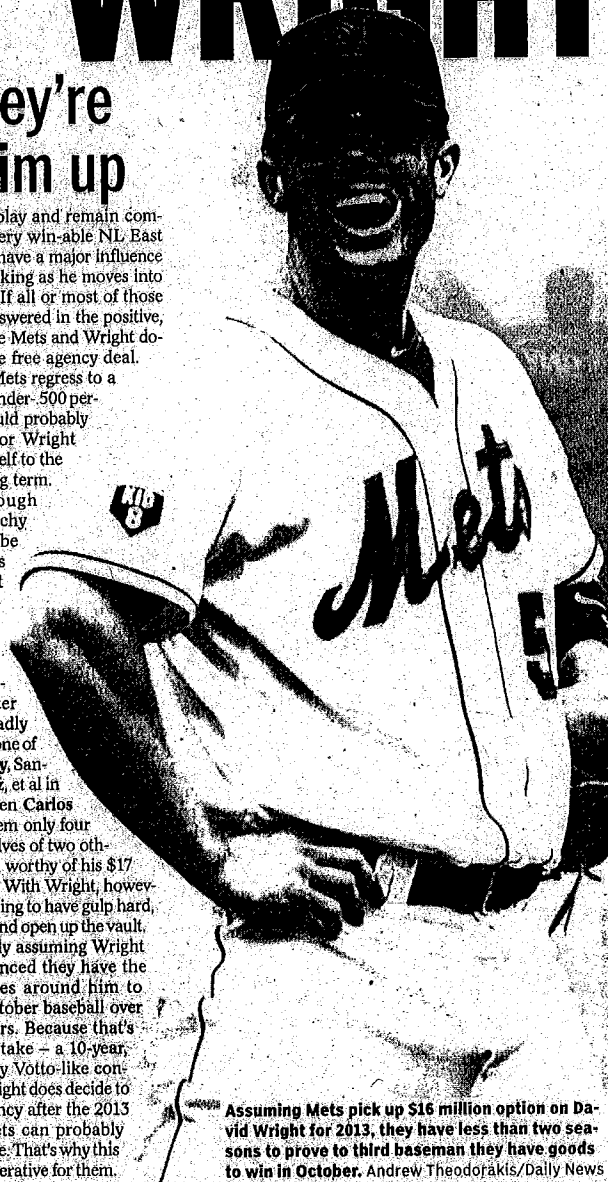
Indeed, how this season plays out — whether the Mets are able to sustain

their over-.500 play and remain competitive in the very win-able NL East — will no doubt have a major influence on Wright's thinking as he moves into his option year. If all or most of those questions are answered in the positive, one could see the Mets and Wright doing a preemptive free agency deal.

If not, and the Mets regress to a fourth-straight under-.500 performance, it would probably not bode well for Wright consigning himself to the team for the long term.

And even though the Mets hierarchy knows it would be killed if it allows Wright to walk, it remains understandably gunshy about getting involved in long-term mega-bucks deals after being burned badly by almost every one of them — Jason Bay, Santana, Ollie Perez, et al in recent years. Even Carlos Beltran gave them only four seasons (and halves of two others) out of seven worthy of his \$17 million per year. With Wright, however, they're just going to have to gulp hard, close their eyes and open up the vault.

But that's only assuming Wright has been convinced they have the necessary pieces around him to play a lot of October baseball over the next 10 years. Because that's what's going to take — a 10-year, Derek Jeter/Joey Votto-like contract. And, if Wright does decide to go into free agency after the 2013 season, the Mets can probably kiss him goodbye. That's why this season is so imperative for them.

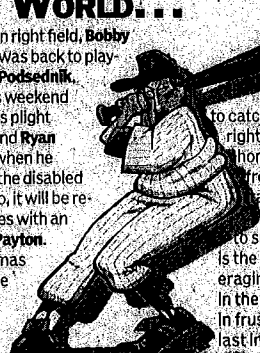


Assuming Mets pick up \$16 million option on David Wright for 2013, they have less than two seasons to prove to third baseman they have goods to win in October. Andrew Theodorakis/Daily News

## It's A MADD MADD WORLD...

After a brief flirtation with Adrian Gonzalez in right field, Bobby Valentine, who knows from makeshift outfields, was back to playing retreats Marlon Byrd, Daniel Nava and Scott Podsednik, with old reliable Darrell McDonald in reserve this weekend against the Tampa Bay Rays. Such is the Red Sox's plight with Jacoby Ellsbury, Carl Crawford, Cody Ross and Ryan Sweeney, the outfield Valentine thought he had when he signed on as Red Sox manager last winter, all on the disabled list. But then, this is nothing new for Bobby V, who, it will be remembered, took the Mets to the 2000 World Series with an outfield of Benny Agbayani, Timo Perez and Jay Payton.

Caleb Lloyd, a 20-year-old junior from Thomas More College in Cincinnati, must have felt a little like Johnny Vander Meer when he attended the Reds-Braves game at Great American Ballpark last Monday. Like Vander Meer, the legendary



Reds pitcher who is the only man in history to pitch two no-hitters in a row, Lloyd is probably the only fan in history to catch back-to-back home runs. Sitting in the left field seats, Lloyd was in perfect position to catch Reds pitcher Mike Leake's first career home run, which was hit right at him. Four pitches later, Reds shortstop Zack Cozart hit another homer to left which Lloyd was able to snare on one bounce with his free hand. He later gave both balls away — one to his friend who had talked him into coming to the game and the other to Leake.

There's trouble in Cleveland even though the Indians continue to surprise, holding forth in first place in the AL Central. The trouble is the Indian fans' apathy to their unexpected early season success. Averaging just 15,518 fans for their first 22 games, the Indians ranked last in the majors in attendance, prompting closer Chris Perez to lash out in frustration: "It's just a slap in the face when you're in first place and last in attendance. Oakland is outdrawing us. That's embarrassing."

## SAY IT AIN'T SO...

"You hit 54 home runs and then hit 35, it's not good enough. How many people hit 35? Never good enough, bro. That's why I don't care... Basically it seems like no matter what you do, it's not good enough." — Red Sox DH David Ortiz's tirade last Monday at those critics who have said he's not a leader in the Red Sox clubhouse.

DAVID LENNON'S EXTRA INNINGS

david.lennon@newsday.com

400: A lot has to go Wright

After nudging himself up from 399 to 405 in Thursday's monsoon, David Wright smiled uncomfortably when asked about, you know, his batting average. As with any historical pursuit, it must be done over an extended period; and Wright gave a typical response after the game.

But doesn't he at least sneak an occasional peek at the scoreboard? Just to appreciate hitting .400, for however long it might last? And who's to say it has to end?

"It's May," Wright said. "It's really, really early. So you can't get caught up in looking."

Then again, it's early only until it's not. The last two players to finish a season within 10 points of .400 — Tony Gwynn (.394) in 1994 and George Brett (.390) in 1980 — appeared to fall off the pace in May before heating up in midsummer.

Gwynn was batting .408 on May 15, then .385 on May 27, and never made it higher than the point at which he finished the year. Brett took a different path. On May 27, he was hitting .281, and it took him the next 50 games (interrupted by a month on the DL) to finally get to .401 on Aug. 17. During that ridiculous stretch, Brett batted a superhuman .478 (97-for-203) with a 1.291 OPS.

Wright had a 1.128 OPS through his first 41 games and has appeared unstoppable. "He's in a zone like no other," Terry Collins said this past

week. "He's got a routine he sticks with, he believes in it, and he gets himself ready to play."

Wright, aside from his fractured pinkie finger, has stayed relatively healthy. He missed only three games with that injury and has shown no ill effects since his return on April 14, when he homered on the first pitch thrown to him.

But could Wright's durability also be his downfall?

Knowing Wright, he's far more likely than not to get his usual 600-plus plate appearances and 150-plus games. A fractured back cost him seven weeks in 2011, but he still had 447 plate appearances and 102 games. In 2009, a concussion put him on the shelf for two weeks, but he logged 144 games anyway.

As Brett showed, however, continuity is not the key to making a run at .400. After a month off, he went on a 30-game hitting streak, then missed two more weeks in September before resuming his chase. With hitters so wedded to their routines in this day and age, what Brett did sounds impossible to duplicate.

Wright, asked about his success, stressed the importance of repeating the same formula over and over. "You try to have some consistency to your setup and your approach," he said. "I try to come in, do the same work in the cage."

He credited teammates in his BP group, such as Daniel Murphy, who help point out discrepancies in his stance or swing. He knows that to even get within shouting distance of Ted Williams, who hit .406 in 1941, preparation is only part of it.

"There's so many variables," he said. "You could up go there and have great at-bats and not have anything to show for it. You go out there and have terrible at-bats, and a couple bloopers fall in. So it's one of those things where I've been lucky quite a bit. Some balls have found some holes."

Maglo numbers

40,715

Fans at Busch Stadium, where Thursday's game earned an R-rating after a 22-year-old man stripped and streaked across the outfield. Have to say it was more enjoyable to watch when the Rally Squirrel did it.

300

Employees laid off by Curt Schilling, whose video-game company, 38 Studios, was late on a \$1.1-million payment. That's close to what Schilling made in two weeks during his five-year stint with Red Sox.

122.4

Miles per hour, the velocity registered by Giancarlo Stanton's grand slam that broke a scoreboard Monday. It was the highest since 2006, the start of such tracking, and came off Jamie Moyer, whose fastball wouldn't get pulled over on the turnpike.

21

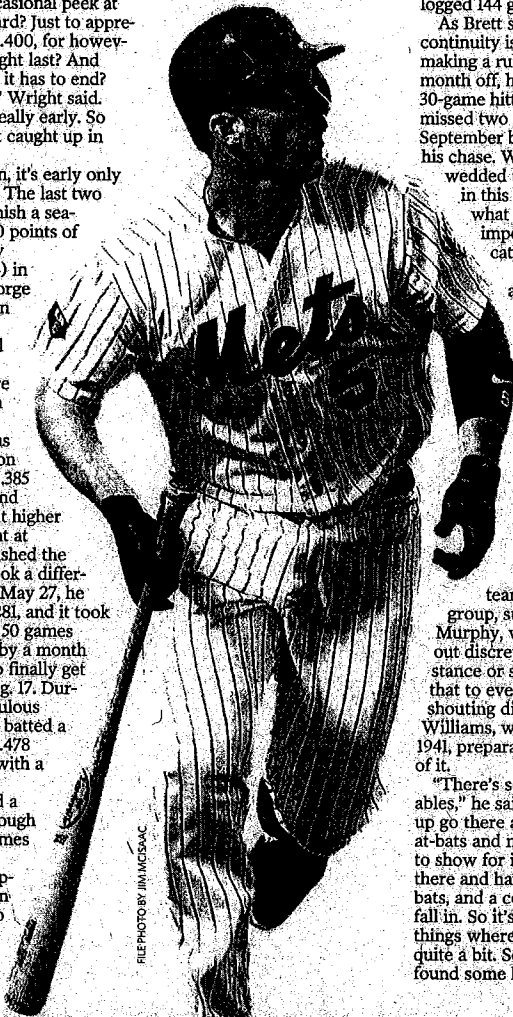
Home runs by Chipper Jones against the Reds, who honored him Thursday with a video montage. They also had his name and No. 10 on every base. In four months, Mets can borrow hubcaps from outside Citi Field and spell "Larry" on leftfield wall.

14

Strikeouts by Dan Haren, who became first Angel and only 16th pitcher since 1913 to post as many Ks without a walk in a shutout. Roger Clemens and Pedro Martinez are only ones to do it multiple times.

8

Home runs hit by White Sox and Twins, combined, after Snoop Dogg threw out the first pitch Thursday at U.S. Cellular Field. Most high-profile cameo for Dogg since his Speaker City bash in "Old School."



FILE PHOTO BY JIM MCSHANE



GETTY IMAGES FILE PHOTO

Former Met Jeff Francoeur thinks the young and talented Royals are on the right track.

French connection

If anyone knows the trials and tribulations of a young star, it's Jeff Francoeur, who went from being called The Natural in Atlanta to winding up with the Mets five years later. Now in Kansas City, Francoeur is surrounded by the 2012 versions of his former self, from Alex Gordon to Mike Moustakas to Eric Hosmer.

So far, all of that potential has been slow to materialize, but Francoeur's Royals, with a \$64-million payroll, are somewhat encouraged by the struggles of the big-market clubs, even beating up on a few of them recently. They are 9-6 against the Red Sox, Yankees, Angels and Rangers. But they're 18-27 overall, and contention still looks to be another year away.

"If you look at a team like Tampa Bay, how they've built it, and I think that's what we're kind of hoping to happen here," said Francoeur, who homered twice in three games at Yankee Stadium last week. "Getting a lot of position players molded together with young arms."

"Yeah, you do play teams with a lot of experience and a lot of money. But I think more and more, you look at the standings in the NL East, even the AL East, with all these teams right around each other, the playing field is starting to even out."

Watch game highlights every day from around baseball at [newsday.com/mlbvideo](http://newsday.com/mlbvideo)

Hot-hitting Mets third baseman David Wright took a swing at some questions from Post columnist Steve Serby in a Q&A session.

# SIRBY'S SUNDAY Q&A WITH... David WRIGHT

**Q: Should you be the Captain of the Mets?**

A: It was funny, 'cause I read this quote recently ... something like, "Leadership is like toughness — if you talk about it, then you don't have it." And that kinda stuck with me because ... leaders, the guys that I consider leaders ... look at Derek Jeter crosstown ... He's not a guy that's gonna go for attention's sake — it's funny me saying this after coming off of yelling at Terry (Collins) on camera — you don't see [Jeter] do things for show on camera. When he needs to say something, it's almost like he pulled a guy aside and does it away from the attention and stuff, and that's the type of leader that I want to be, and the type of leaders that I respect. The guys that go out there and lead by example first and foremost, and feel comfortable pulling a guy aside and kinda doing it privately. And also, if somebody sees something with me, I want them to feel comfortable enough pulling me aside, even if it's a rookie or something like that.

**Q: Do you feel guilty about the dugout confrontation?**

A: I wouldn't say guilty. I think it's more ... I wish that the situation would have been differently where I could have done it more privately. But it just so happened that I was supposed to hit first. I was trying to get ready to hit, obviously, and the situation kinda dictated that. I was apologetic to Terry because it made it look like I was ... kinda getting on him and not respecting the position when, in essence, it was more of the situation than him.

**Q: Would you welcome a C on your chest? Do you feel like you're ready for it?**

A: That's a better question for the 24 guys in there and the coaching staff, 'cause I would want them to dictate that, not me.

**Q: What would it mean to you?**

A: I would hope that the guys in the clubhouse respect me as much as I respect them ... and I hope that feeling is mutual. But I feel comfortable in a position where I feel like I'm one of the leaders on this team. ... There's no question I feel very comfortable in that role.

**Q: Do you want to be a Met for life?**

A: I would like to, yes ... I feel

like there's so much unfinished business. I feel like that it'd be nice to kinda finish what I started. ... We started going in the right direction, we got derailed a little bit, got off track, and we get kinda back going in that right direction. ... I got a small taste of what it's like in 2006 — that's so addicting. That's incredibly motivating. You get that one taste and you almost get spoiled with it, you think you're going back the next year and that's taken away from you. Then you think you're going back the year after that, and that's taken away from you. I think that, having been through that, it's such a motivating force behind your offseason workouts, spring training, going through the season, because I want to be a part of getting us back to [being in] contention year in, year out.

**Q: Are there any plans to sit down with the club about your contract?**

A: No, there's nothing. ... I'm unbelievably satisfied with the first contract I signed. And really the ball is in the front office's court, as far as I have a team option next year, so that's their decision. ... I guess, to answer your question, I'm not sure what the future holds. But it's something that I'm not gonna lose any sleep

over, because it's very difficult, especially in this division, to face the pitchers that we face, and get ready for a game. And it's a lot more difficult when you're thinking about a contract in the back of your mind.

**Q: Would it hurt you if they decided that they needed to build for the future and had to trade David Wright?**

A: I guess it would be hurtful. But there's always that ugly kinda business side to everything. ... This organization's been good to me. ... I've got a great relationship with everybody in this organization, and it would obviously be tough for me to leave. But ... there's so many different things that can happen between now and then.

**Q: Was Jose Reyes a reminder of the business side for you?**

A: I think so. It's tough to see Reyes go, we've been through so much together, we've known each other for so long, ... but yeah, that's that side of it that kinda unfortunately happens pretty frequently in today's game.

**Q: Do you enjoy being the "face of the franchise"?**

A: (Chuckle) I'm not sure what that means. But I enjoy the responsibility of being accountable, good and bad. I'll be the first one to tell you, I loved all the perks that came along with winning here. ... And, I'll tell you also that I'm willing to stand up and kinda take the heat and shoulder the burden when things aren't going well, because I'd like to think I'm a part of both.

**Q: Is it easy to play in New York?**

A: Easy? No, it's fun, because I enjoy the intensity, I enjoy the energy. I understand, like we mentioned before, kinda both ends of the spectrum, after going through the good and the bad.

**Q: Not talking specifically about you — what do you think it would take to hit .400?**

A: (Chuckle) A whole lot of luck. A whole lot of good

health. And, to be a part of a very good lineup. That's scratching the surface of what it probably takes.

**Q: Do you allow yourself to even fathom the possibility that you could do it?**

A: (Chuckle) No, no, no, no. You think about it. There's so much, to me, variables. There's so much luck that comes along with getting a base hit. I can go up there and do everything I'm supposed to do, and hit the ball right at somebody. You go up there and be completely off and have a terrible at-bat, break your bat and loop one over the first baseman's head for a hit. ... It just goes to show you, to have that kind of consistency, it's incredible. ... To do that over the course of six months is damn near impossible.

**Q: Describe what it's like being in a zone.**

A: I don't know, let me know if you talk to somebody that knows (chuckle). For me, being in the zone means that every day you come to the ballpark and you can kind of repeat what you did the day before. And in this game, it's so tough 'cause you could be off by a fraction of an inch, you can be off by a fraction of a second, and not be able to duplicate the same thing that you did even the swing before, much less the day before. So, for me, it's about coming in, kinda going through the same routine, getting my work in and trying to duplicate the consistency over a long stretch.

**Q: Are you going to be like Jeter and stay single for another 10 years or so?**

A: (Chuckle) I don't know. ... It's one of those things where, as passionate as I am about the game, it's difficult to have ... You see the guys bring their kids into the clubhouse and kinda hang out with them in the clubhouse and stuff, and that's really cool. So, hopefully that's in the cards for me.

**Q: Are you ready to host "Saturday Night Live"?**

A: (Laugh) That bar's been set way too high. I think Eli [Manning] did a fantastic job. ... First you gotta win. So if we win, I'll be the first one to sign up for that (smile).

**Q: You would sign up for that before "Dancing With the Stars"?**

A: Without a doubt. I don't think I can compete with Donald Driver (smile).



Geddy Hinton



Posted: 3:51 pm May 25, 2012

## Orioles' proposed Jones deal makes sense for the surprising first-place team

By Jon Heyman | Baseball Insider

The Orioles' proposed new contract with Adam Jones for about \$85.5 million over six years sure sounds high for a player who has never had a full season with a .290 batting average, a .350 on-base percentage, a .500 slugging percentage or an .800 OPS.

But it's a good deal for the Orioles, and here's why.

He's just getting started being a star. Jones is only 26 and improving, he's an excellent defender and by all accounts a personable and fine young man and highly respected by opponents.

Jones' current .311 batting average, .357 on-base percentage, .601 slugging percentage and .958 OPS would all be career highs. All of them. By a lot.

The surprising first-place Orioles are on a nice run, and Jones is a big part of it. His numbers, age and status as a player within two years of free agency logically add up to the biggest contract in Orioles history, beating the \$72 million, six-year deal of Miguel Tejada, who is trying for a comeback with them now and hoping he's seen as the third baseman in waiting.

Some folks are skeptical about the proposed Jones deal, which is awaiting at least the results of his physical Wednesday before it can be finalized. "They certainly are buying high," one competing GM said.

That may be true. But the price will only rise for a mid-20s speed-burner who has power and is one of the best outfielders in the game.

The Orioles made the right move this past winter, turning down trade proposals that were centered around Jair Jurrjens and Drew Storen. And they are doing the right thing again with Jones.

## Youthful Astros are playing better than expected



By *[Tim Brown](#)*

LOS ANGELES – The Houston Astros had come upon competence like a purse-snatcher at a church bingo hall, so when the deed was done and the commotion over, they'd be remembered for being mostly unmemorable. It was neither their fault nor their plan, as the transgression came when and where folks least expected it – broad daylight in the NL Central.

They showed up, kept their heads down, mixed with the crowd and leaned a little closer to their first presentable month in a couple seasons. They crept up on a winning record in late May, in a division that has some give in it, and would beat reigning Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw at Dodger Stadium, where the Dodgers had won 19 of 23 games.

Jose Altuve is one of the fresh faces propelling the Houston Astros. (Getty Images)Competence is a long way from October, but it is just as far from helpless, which is about where we'd left the Astros. They lost 106 games last season, earning every one of them, and early assessments of the young and gutted Astros put them on the same dreary path in 2012. Of their three most identifiable players, two – pitchers Wandy Rodriguez and Brett Myers – had a good chance to be traded before summer was over. The third – first baseman Carlos Lee – would be traded if anyone would have him (and his contract).

So there's something to their record bubbling around .500, and their third-place standing in the NL Central, and their brush with relevance that apparently will extend beyond Memorial Day. The new general manager – Jeff Luhnow, from the St. Louis Cardinals – already has had a conversation with the new Astros owner about fortifying at the late-July trading deadline, rather than deconstructing, the latter having been the presumed course.

"Does it change our plan? No," Luhnow said. "Our plan is building the Astros to be a perennial contender. We're not there. We have a lot of work to do. We're enjoying the short-term success so far and hope it continues. We don't have a lot of margin for error. We know that. But so far we haven't needed it."

[Jeff Passan: [Collegian Derrick Salberg gains instant fame with a catch for the ages](#)]

It won't be good enough to be just good enough a year from now, when the Astros will be well into their first season in the heartier American League, but that's of no consequence today.

No, today they'll try to pitch a little better, and get on base a little more often, and allow their position players – the club's youngest in nearly two decades – to grow up another four or five at-bats. So far, they've been vulnerable away from Minute Maid Park, on the road where the big-boy wins come. But the

bullpen has been among the best in the league, the defense has been sound and the rest has been average enough to not be fatal.

"When you have a young team," Luhnow said, "they're unpredictable."

If that sounds like something less than a championship team, or not even a contending team, that's because the Astros probably aren't. But if that sounds like a team that's beginning to believe in itself, that might actually be ahead of its organizational rehab schedule, that is just raw and impressionable enough to make something good of 2012, they think so too.

And maybe that's the beauty of youth, when 106 losses don't leave a scar. Kids, they heal. They bounce. They come back tomorrow.

Perhaps none of the Astros represent these Astros better than Jose Altuve, the 22-year-old Venezuelan shortstop who's no bigger than a bobblehead but is batting .312. He talks softly, carries a small stick and yet amounts to much more than the impression taken from a casual once-over, just like the Astros themselves. Of the National League's regular second basemen, only Omar Infante's OPS is at a higher rate than Altuve. Seriously, you could fit two Altuves into Dan Uggla's left biceps. And so what?

"You know," Altuve said, "I think in baseball everything can happen. We're going to go day by day, inning by inning. If we go like that, we're going to have good news at the end of the year."

Of all the parts of a baseball game that either have come to Altuve or he's wrung from himself, there is a part he loves most. It's occurred after nearly half the games the Astros have played, in wins borne of the arms of Rodriguez or Bud Norris or, Friday night in L.A., Lucas Harrell. Perhaps in wins off the bats of Jed Lowrie or J.D. Martinez or even Lee. In the ninth innings tamped down by Myers.

[Also: [Benches clear in Boston as Red Sox-Rays rivalry heats up](#)]

Astros owner Jim Crane and general manager Jeff Luhnow (Getty Images)It's the handshake, the one that says, hey, we played well.

"That's the best part of the day," Altuve said.

So, while you may be waiting on the Astros to become overmatched and pathetic again, you might also keep an eye on your purse. Hours before the Astros would battle Kershaw and the 30-win Dodgers, manager Brad Mills was asked how they might match up. He steered around a direct comparison. He said his boys believed in themselves. He said they'd give it a go.

"That's our focus," he said.

And then Lee traipsed past.

"We are better," Lee shouted with a grin. "We are better. That's it."

He laughed and Mills laughed with him. Many more months like this, folks are going to see them coming.



05/26/12 9:05 PM ET

## Harper's hustle, not homer, makes impression

By Mike Bauman / MLB.com

ATLANTA -- The Atlanta Braves gave Bryce Harper an inch. He took 90 feet.

For anybody who wanted to see what is so exceptional about Harper, his singular capacity for making a difference was on display Saturday. What happened with Harper occurred in an instant. But that is all Harper required to make another strong impression.

And no, it wasn't the opposite-field homer the 19-year-old Washington Nationals rookie hit off a very tough lefty, Jonny Venters, of the Atlanta Braves. That was impressive in its own right for its own reasons. This was something else.

The moment came in the fifth inning. It had no bearing on the outcome, an 8-4 Washington victory. It did not lead to a run. But it was instructive about what kind of a player Harper is.

With two outs and none on, Washington leading by two, Harper singled sharply to right. The ball was hit directly at Braves right fielder Jason Heyward, and it was hit well enough so that it would reach Heyward in little time.

Heyward came in on the ball just a bit casually, but this had routine single written all over it. Except, to Bryce Harper; to him, it said second base.

Harper never hesitated coming around first. Heyward bobbled the ball ever so slightly. But Harper was headed for second at top speed before that happened. What looked a lot like "He's trying for second? You've got to be kidding me," suddenly turned into Harper sliding into second, comfortably ahead of the tag.

The play was scored a single and an error. That was a standard scoring decision. But you wished there was a way to get Bryce Harper something more than a single there, some additional credit for hustle, for awareness, for baseball intelligence; all of it blended of course, with a large amount of speed.

"You know, that's a heads-up play," Nationals manager Davey Johnson said. "Heyward went after it kind of nonchalantly.

"After the play [Heyward] went like this," Johnson said, tapping his chest. "'My fault.' He knew it. I used to get a lot of extra-base hits where you hit the ball and if the guy didn't come in hard, just keep running."

It was a hot day in late May at Turner Field, still 91 degrees at 6 p.m. But the one guy who wouldn't be playing at anything like a languid pace would be Bryce Harper.

"If the outfielder doesn't come hard, I usually take the next bag," Harper said. "I came hard out of the box. I was on my way [to second] before he bobbled it, and then once he bobbled it, I knew that I was pretty much surely in there."

Here is another solid indication of who Harper is and will be as a player. He liked this play better than the seventh-inning solo home run off Venters.

"Absolutely, a good hustle double, that's always fun," Harper said. "Maybe they didn't give it to me, but I thought it was. You know, I like doing that. It's part of my game."

The solo home run rounded off a productive day at the plate for Harper, who was 2-for-4 with a walk. It was Harper's third home run and his first off a left-hander. He becomes just the third left-handed batter to homer off Venters.

Harper, just 26 games into his big league career, has made steady progress at the plate, making consistently hard contact. After a difficult start, his numbers are respectable (.278, .366, .495) and obviously trending upward.

"I feel pretty good up there right now," Harper said. "I think it's just a matter of time before I get going. I struggle at the beginning usually and once I see guys and what not, that's when things really get going. Having guys around me that can really swing it helps, also. [Ryan] Zimmerman hitting behind me scares some people."

The hype has been legendary for the arrival of this player. But you watch him play and you understand; he is more substance than hype. The image that will stick from this game will be Bryce Harper getting two bases on what for the vast majority of baseball humanity was a completely routine single.

"Whatever his age is," Johnson said with a smile, "that was a pretty damned good play."

EXTRA BASES

**VALENTINE CALLS OUT RAYS' STAFF**

Red Sox manager Bobby Valentine called out the Tampa Bay Rays' coaching staff a day after the teams were involved in a benches-clearing scrum.

Valentine said the Rays' staff escalated the tense situation in the ninth inning of Tampa Bay's 7-4 win on Friday night after Red Sox reliever Franklin Morales hit Luke Scott on the right leg. He called their actions as "unprofessional."

"I thought their coaches were really aggressive, as a matter of fact I took offense to the aggressiveness of their coaches," Valentine said. "I thought it was really unprofessional. I was really proud of the way my coaches and what they were trying to do, what they were supposed to do in those situations."

Rays manager Joe Maddon was asked a few different times to comment on Valentine's accusations, but avoided it by specifically praising Boston's players.

"I covered everything I wanted to cover on that last night," Maddon said. "The thing I want to cover today is how much respect I have for the Red Sox players."

■ **O's, Jones reach deal**

The Orioles and Adam Jones have agreed to an \$85.5 million, six-year contract through 2018, a person familiar with the negotiations said, the largest deal in Orioles' history. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal had not yet been announced. The Orioles announced a news conference for today.

Jones has a \$6.15 million, one-year contract, had been eligible for arbitration next winter and for free agency after the 2013 season. Vice president of baseball operations Dan Duquette began negotiating a new deal with the 2009 All-Star weeks ago.

■ **Liriano back in rotation**

Ready or not, Francisco Liriano is jumping back into the Minnesota Twins' beleaguered starting rotation. Desperate for some stability in his starting five, manager Ron Gardenhire announced that Liriano would return to the rotation for a start against the Oakland Athletics on Wednesday. — AP

**DIAMOND REPORT**



Rangers' Josh Hamilton watches his walk-off two-run home run off Blue Jays' Jason Frasor.

**Hamilton's 20th HR lifts Rangers in 13th**

ARLINGTON, Texas — Josh Hamilton hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the 13th inning, lifting the Rangers to an 8-7 victory over the Blue Jays yesterday.

Toronto had taken a 7-5 lead in the top half, but Elvis Andrus doubled in a run off Ryota Igarashi to start the comeback. Hamilton's third game-ending homer came off Jason Frasor (0-1) and was his 20th home run of the year.

Ian Kinsler walked to start the inning and Andrus doubled. Frasor relieved and gave up the home run.

In the top of the 13th,

SCORECARD	
<b>T</b>	<b>8 : 7</b>
RANGERS	BLUE JAYS

Omar Vizquel hit an RBI single for Toronto and later scored after Nelson Cruz misplayed a fly ball by Yunel Escobar with two outs. Vizquel was 3-for-6 with his first two RBIs of the season.

Texas left a runner stranded at third base in the seventh, ninth, 10th and 11th innings, and before Hamilton's hit, Texas was 1-for-15 with runners in scoring posi-

tion. Yoshinori Tateyama (1-0), Texas' seventh pitcher, got one out for the win.

Texas relievers Mike Adams, Joe Nathan, Koji Uehara and Robbie Ross combined to retire 14 in a row starting with the final out of the seventh until Ross walked Colby Rasmus with one out in the 12th.

In the sixth, Texas' 7-8-9 hitters Cruz, Yorvit Torrealba and Mitch Moreland each hit 400-plus foot home runs to left-centerfield. It was the seventh time in club history the Rangers hit three consecutive home runs in an inning. — AP

ROUNDUP

**Harper, Strasburg lead Nats**

Bryce Harper homered and Danny Espinosa added a three-run shot to help the Washington Nationals strengthen their hold on first place in the NL East by beating the reeling Atlanta Braves, 8-4, yesterday.

Stephen Strasburg (5-1) was not sharp but still won. He set a season high with four walks and gave up four runs and six hits in five innings. He had six strikeouts.

The Braves' season-worst losing streak reached six games as they fell three games behind the Nationals.

Before the game, the Braves placed Chipper Jones on the 15-day disabled list with a bruised left leg.

Dan Uggla's two-run, tying homer in the fifth was the big hit for the shorthanded Braves.

**Marlins 5, Giants 3:** Mark Buehrle pitched into the eighth inning as host Miami moved within a victory of tying the team record for the most in a month. Giancarlo Stanton hit two doubles and scored twice and Logan Morrison drove in two runs for the Marlins. Miami is a major league-best 18-7 in May. The Marlins went 19-10 in August 1997.

**White Sox 14, Indians 7:** Paul Konerko had four hits and Dayan Viciedo homered in his third straight game as host Chicago pounded Derek Lowe and shorthanded Cleveland for its eighth win in nine games. Chicago scored four in the first and four more while chasing Lowe in the third after Cleveland scored five in the top half.

**Royals 4, Orioles 3:** Eric Hosmer singled in the tiebreaking run in the eighth inning and Billy Butler homered to rally visiting Kansas City. Hosmer went 3-for-4 with two RBIs to help the Royals make up a three-run deficit.

**Tigers 6, Twins 3:** Max Scherzer struck out nine in a rain-shortened outing and Prince Fielder had his first four-hit game with the Tigers to lead visiting Detroit. — AP

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# Mike Vaccaro

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OPEN MIKE

**H**ERE is what we know: It is an inexact science, the business of figuring out who can coach and who can't; distinguishing between those who look like coaches and can't coach a lick and those who look like they should be in any profession other than coaching and yet come across like sages and savants in their sports.

Sometimes it's guesswork, sometimes a track record, and sometimes neither of that makes any sense. Larry Brown should have been a no-brainer for the Knicks and turned into one of the great fiascos of all time. Joe Torre inspired all manner of clever and negative blurbs, and all he did was manage the Yankees to four titles and himself to a certain slot in the Hall of Fame.

John Tortorella wasn't exactly a wing-and-a-prayer pick when he became the Rangers coach three years ago. He already owned a championship ring. He already had a resume. As Reggie Jackson might

have put it, he didn't have to come to New York

## WHAT A TEAM!

### This collection of coaches may be among city's all-time bests

to find his star, he brought it with him.

The silly sideshow that became his postgame press conferences these past few weeks never should obscure one thing: He is the Rangers best coach since Emil Francis (unless you want to ignore both the brevity of Mike Keenan's tenure and the Byzantine way it ended), which means he is just about the best coach any living Rangers fan can remember.

The Rangers got this one right. It doesn't matter how the season ended Friday night. We can state that now. In fact, Tortorella's presence may help make this one of the best times

we ever have had in New York in terms of

quality coaches occupying our town sport to sport, team to team.

There was a brief moment in time when Torre, Bill Parcells, Bobby Valentine and Jeff Van Gundy worked at the same time, although you aren't likely to get a consensus that any or all of those four are on a par with each other. There was a time when Pat Riley, Keenan and Buck Showalter worked the city together, and the same rule applies.

And yes, even today there are those Yankees fans who will argue that the team picked wrong when it went with Joe Girardi over Don Mattingly (even though Girardi already has a championship on his resume and Mattingly, for all of this year's Dodgers feel-good success,

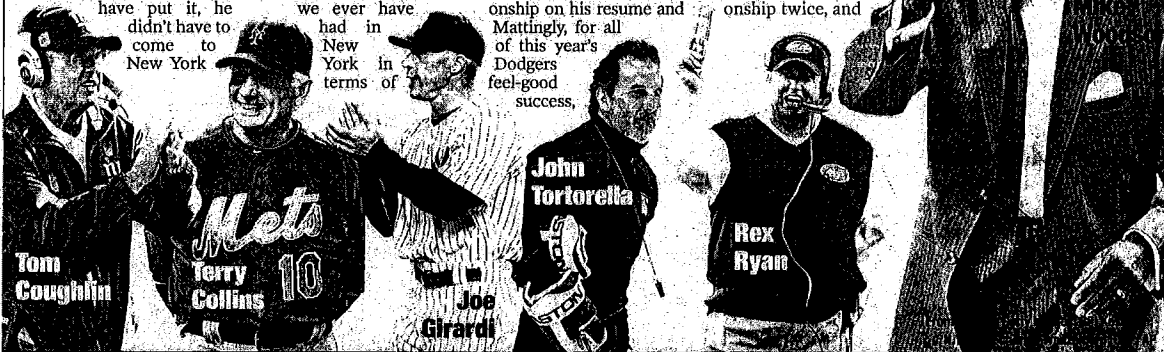
has yet to manage a postseason inning). Not every Jets fan loves Rex Ryan. And though you can't find any of them now, there have been plenty of posers put together through the years to try and turn Tom Coughlin into the ex-coach of the Giants.

Still, of the teams that matter around here, we have three who own a total of four championships (Girardi, Tortorella, Coughlin); one (Avery Johnson) who coached a team to the Finals; one (Peter DeBoer) whose team just qualified for a Stanley Cup Finals; one (Ryan) who coached a team to the conference championship twice, and

one, Terry Collins — who may have as much support among his own fans this moment as any manager or coach — who has helped overturn losing cultures in Houston and Anaheim before, thus far, doing the same in Flushing.

That leaves Mike Woodson, who may not boil the blood of those who were hoping for Phil Jackson but, after his 18-6 push this year, has improved his winning percentage in each of his seven years as a coach (.159 to .317, .388, .451, .580, .646 to .750). And Jack Capuano of the Islanders, who did a fine job in his first year as a coach and whose book is completely unwritten.

You don't always get this stuff right. But it's hard to say, at this point in time, that anyone's gotten it wrong.



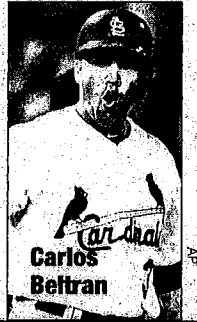
## VAC'S WHACKS

I DON'T think I was alone in adding 30 percent to hockey's coolness quotient the other night when we learned it is possible to get two minutes for "embellishment." If only there were a similar rule we could enact for blowhards in saloons, the world would be a much better place, no?

► I agree with Sandy Alderson: Sending Ike Davis to Buffalo would have been the easy move. Let him find his stroke here, if it's findable.

► How much fun do you suppose it's been to be a San Antonio Spurs fan the last 15 years or so? How much fun will it be to be an Oklahoma City fan for the next 10?

► I really hope Carlos Beltran gets a warmer reception this week than Jose Reyes did, mostly because Beltran deserves a warmer reception.



**Andy Romanic:** Donald Driver compared winning "Dancing with the Stars" with winning the Super Bowl. Your thoughts?

**Vac:** It certainly makes me want to dust off my old WWCB wristband: "What Would Chuck Bednarik Do?"

**Gary Levick:** Dusty Baker is, I believe, one of the worst managers in the history of baseball. He singlehandedly ruined Mark Prior's and Kerry

## WHACK BACK AT VAC

Wood's careers. He had crazy talent with the Cubs, Giants and now the Reds. I don't understand how he keeps getting jobs.

**Vac:** If I were Aroldis Chapman's agent, I'd be afraid. Very afraid.

**@DonCheech:** I'm about to start watching this week's "The Killing." How ticked off will I be after

tonight's episode on a scale 1-10?

**@MikeVacc:** Me and Cheech are two who decided to come back for Season 2 even after Season 1 bludgeoned us over the head with a 2-by-4. I clearly have no pride, nor any shame, because I still watch, and I get angrier by the week. So to answer the question:

I start every week at "9" and hope for the best, which means settling for a 5 or a 6. Which, for the record, to answer Cheech, is where last week's episode sat. **Jerry Falzarano:** I enjoyed your article on the Manchester City drama on the last day of Premier League. I hope you checked out

the UEFA Champions league final where Chelsea defeated Bayern Munich on their home turf to become champions of Europe for first time, and the upcoming UEFA 2012 tournament in Poland and Ukraine from June 8-July 1. Promises to be dramatic!

**Vac:** One thing I've learned in my brief time as an appreciator of soccer: They don't suffer from a dearth of important matches, do they?

EVERY SUNDAY, MIKE VACCARO RESPONDS TO READERS' QUESTIONS AT [VAC@NYPOST.COM](mailto:vac@nypost.com) AND @MIKEVACC ON TWITTER

# THE SCORE

## The Babe, Boss and air raids

**M**arty Appel, the author of "Pinstripe Empire: The New York Yankees from Before the Babe to After the Boss," spent more than 20 years with the club either in media relations or as an executive producer for WPIX television broadcasts. We sat down with him for five questions about his book, which was released May 8 and is, Appel says, the first narrative Yankee history since Frank Graham's in 1943.

In our conversation, we learned some things about the club's rich history

and scored a couple of Daily News tidbits, too. For instance, The News used to pay for the lights at Yankee Stadium to be turned on during overcast day games to insure good photos and used homing pigeons to get the film from the ballpark to the old building on 42nd Street.

**Q:** What are some things that a Yankee fan can learn from your book that they don't know?

**A:** I think the opportunity to know Jacob Ruppert better is an important message in the book. George Steinbrenner used to say that buying the Yankees was like buying the Mona Lisa. Ruppert, then, was Da Vinci — he bought Babe Ruth, built Yankee Stadium and established the dynasty. He also set by example the "Yankee Way" of comporting oneself, which was best demonstrated by Joe McCarthy, Lou Gehrig, Bill Dickey and Joe DiMaggio. Another thing people forget about Jacob Ruppert is that in his

time owning the Yankees, he went from Prohibition to the Great Depression — he owned a brewery — and he never let that curtail putting money back into the team.



**Q:** How did your experience working in Yankees' media relations and as a TV producer work into the book?

**A:** I always loved history in school and from the first day I was here in 1968, I appreciated that history was unfolding every day. I took the opportunity to talk to old-time players. I once had dinner with Roger Peckinpaugh (a shortstop for the Yanks from 1913-21, who was also player-manager for 20 games in 1914) and I taped it and it was almost the starting point for the book. I started working for the Yankees in 1968 and Mickey (Mantle) was still an active player and I had the opportunity to come to know all the greats — Berra, Ford, DiMaggio, Rizzuto. Old Timer's Day was very meaningful for me because I was able to establish relationships — Babe Ruth's teammates, for instance. Also, just knowing Pete Sheehy (the former clubhouse manager) and having him open up to me with stories about Gehrig and Dickey was a treat I appreciated every day I was here.

**Q:** What's unique about these current Yankee teams against the backdrop of all this history?

**'Pinstripe Empire: The New York Yankees from Before the Babe to After the Boss' by Marty Appel is published by Bloomsbury and is available in bookstores now.**

**A:** The current team, which we consider since '96, has really defied Yankee history by being both successful and likeable. Historically, Yankee haters always found reasons to dislike the team's success. But in this modern era, with such likeable guys as Rivera, Jeter, Bernie Williams, Torre, Girardi, I think non-Yankee fans find this team very difficult to dislike, Boston fans excepted.

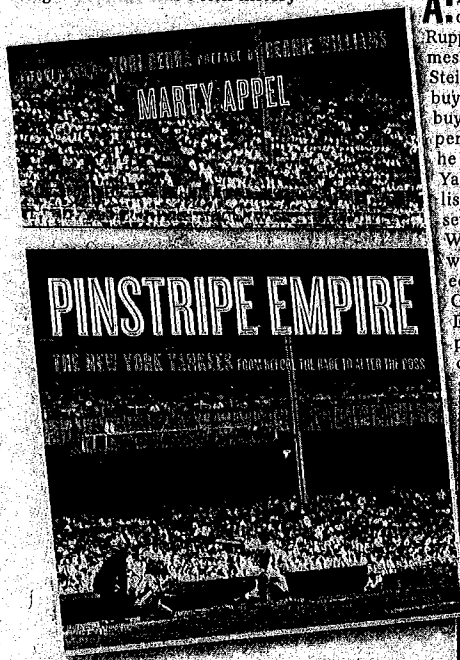
**Q:** What are some of the more obscure nuggets in the book?

**A:** Here's something lost to history — During World War II, fans coming to the ballpark would be handed instructions on what to do during an air raid and where to go. In the event of an enemy bombing, whichever team led after five innings would be declared the winner.

And in 1954, when the streak of five straight world championships ended, they prepared a handout on Fan Appreciation Day recognizing the streak was over, with championship team photos of the past five years. It was an acknowledgement that these fans had "suffered" through a 103-victory season with nothing to show for it. One thing that grew out of 1954 was that it hastened the long, overdue integration of the team. The Yankees were late in integrating the roster and in the front office, they'd say, "We win every year, why shake things up?" This kind of opened the door for them to make the move and they did in 1955 with Ellie Howard.

**Q:** Let's get some debate going. In your opinion, who should be on the "Mount Rushmore" of Yankees from their long list of all-time greats?

**A:** If it has to be four, it has to be Ruth, Gehrig, DiMaggio and Mantle. But, boy, I could make a strong argument for another five or six and that would include Berra, Ford, Howard, on to Munson, Mattingly, Jeter, Rivera.



**DO YOU KNOW THE SCORE?**

Got a hot tip? A juicy rumor or sports celebrity sighting? Drop us a line at [thescore@nydailynews.com](mailto:thescore@nydailynews.com).



### SAY WHAT?

"Someone brought up the jungle fever. We don't even know how that manifests itself."

— WFN radio host Mike Francesa trying to describe the Valley Fever like Davis has been battling that could be behind his dreadful start to 2012 season.

### WHAT'S ON TV THIS WEEK

#### Sunday

**Basketball:** How old is Tim Duncan anyway? We may find out beginning today as Game 1 of the Spurs' Western Conference finals series begins against young Kevin Durant and the Thunder. San Antonio breezed through the first two rounds in the minimum eight games, but this series should be entertaining. **8:30 p.m., TNT**

**Tennis:** Watch out, Rafa, here comes Novak Djokovic! Rafael Nadal, who has won six of the last seven French Opens, defends his title as the No. 2-ranked player behind top-seeded Djokovic, who if he wins his first title at Roland Garros this year, will become the first man to hold all four grand slams since Rod Laver in 1969. **5 a.m., ESPN2; 3 p.m., Ch. 4**

#### Wednesday

**Hockey:** Rangers fans may still be sporting a depressing hangover, but Devils fans are hopping back in the saddle as New Jersey makes its first Stanley Cup Finals appearance since winning its third title in 2003. The eighth-seeded L.A. Kings, who have lost just two games this postseason, invade The Rock for Game 1. **8 p.m., Ch. 4**

**Soccer:** If you prefer the world game, check out U.S. men's national team as it hosts powerhouse Brazil. After beating four-time World Cup winner Italy earlier this year, the U.S., under Jurgen Klinsmann's direction, goes after five-time winner Brazil. **8 p.m., ESPN2**



**TOP 5**

Odds to win No. 1 pick in NBA Draft Lottery to be held Wednesday

**1**  
BOBCATS  
4-1



**2**  
WIZARDS  
5-1



**3**  
CAVALIERS  
7-1



**4**  
HORNETS  
7-1



**5**  
NETS  
13-1



BY WAYNE COFFEY, EBENEZER SAMUEL & BERNIE AUGUSTINE

# Times Square Mania



**T**imes Square has seen its share of action over the decades, whether it has involved the dropping of the New Year's Eve ball or the dropping of pants at many other times. But according to the most eminent New York historians The Score could find, the heart of the city has never seen an event quite like the one coming on June 7 — when a place on the U.S. Olympic freestyle wrestling team will be determined right there amid the midtown mayhem.

"It's the perfect place to win your spot on the Olympic team," said Shawn Bunch, one of the three contenders at the 132-pound weight class. "The energy and the fans will make it unforgettable," said Coleman Scott, another aspiring Olympian. The Olympic wrestle-off will be part of the so-called Grapple in the Apple — a third-annual wrestling extravaganza that will feature a dual meet between the U.S. and Russia, among other matches. The event is being staged by a non-profit organization called Beat The Streets, which

aims to promote wrestling and build valuable life skills for boys and girls in the metropolitan area, and is having its fundraising gala later that night at Roseland Ballroom. The three wannabe Olympians — Bunch, Scott and Reece Humphrey — won't be here to dance, though. They will be coming to earn a ticket to London, an opportunity that came about because the U.S. hadn't officially qualified for a spot at 132 pounds in the Olympic tournament at the time the Olympic trials were held last month in Iowa. It wasn't until Bunch placed third in the Olympic qualifying tournament in China on April 27 that the U.S. secured its spot at 132 pounds, moving USA Wrestling to set up a three-way wrestle-off that will

commence with Scott, of Waynesburg, Pa., a four-time All-American at Oklahoma State who won the 132-pound competition at the Trials, having a single-elimination match with Reece Humphrey, of Columbus, Ohio, the No. 1 ranked American in freestyle at 132 in 2011-12.

The winner will face Bunch in a best-of-three series, and the victor of the those matches will head for London in July. Bunch, also out of Columbus, is positive that New York-style commotion will be no factor.

"I am not concerned about any distractions while I am wrestling in the middle of Times Square. I'm going out there with one goal on my mind and that is to win my spot on the Olympic Team," Bunch said.

## DIGITAL TEBOWING

The Score isn't completely sure if Tim Tebow will spend a lot of time celebrating TDs as a member of Gang Green — did you SEE Mark Sanchez at OTAs last week? — but that doesn't mean you won't be able to see his signature genuflection/celebration on your big screen this season.

That's because EA Sports just revealed that Tebowing will be included in the next iteration of its popular Madden NFL video game.

"Tebowing is in for #madden13," Madden creative director Michael Young tweeted.

That's not the only TD celebration that's in for Madden '13, either. Giants star Victor Cruz will perform his signature salsa after scores, and Pats tight end Rob Gronkowski's "Gronk Spike" will make an appearance too.

And no, virtual Roger Goodell won't fine any one of them.

## CAMO CAPS

So much for red, white and blue.

Each Memorial Day for the last five years, cap company New Era has decked Major Leaguers out in "Stars and Stripes" custom caps that honored American veterans, caps built around the American flag motif. But this



year, New Era has taken a different approach. The Mets will take on the Phillies tomorrow, and the Yankees will face the Angels, and both teams will debut a different Memorial Day look: This year's hats feature camouflaged logos.

"We decided to make these caps even more different," explained New Era CEO Christopher Koch.

It's a look you'll see twice this year: Teams also will wear them on the Fourth of July.

## The Score hears...

## GOING TO BAT FOR ALS

Chris Scandaglia swung from the heels and hit one out of the park.

The 31-year-old stepped up to the plate for a Staten Island family in need earlier this month and — with a little help from some All-Star Yankees — delivered in a major way, raising over \$10,000 for Joanna and Nicholas Chiarulli.

Joanna, a public school teacher, lost her husband, Nick, to ALS in January, less than three months after their son, Nicholas was born. Scandaglia, who lost his grandfather, Frank Gallinaro, to ALS in 1990, read about the Chiarullis and set about helping them in whatever way he could.

He reached out to some high-profile Yankees to see if they would get behind a fundraiser for Joanna and Nicholas, and got commitments from Mariano Rivera, Alex Rodriguez and Robinson Cano for the May 20 event at NYY Steak at the Stadium (Rivera didn't make it because of that pesky ACL injury).

"(Rodriguez and Cano) being there is just huge for ALS awareness," said Scandaglia, who has been organizing ALS fund-raisers for six years. "To have two marquee Yankees... is pretty big for Lou Gehrig's disease. Having them there helped sell tickets."

When it was all said and done Scandaglia sold 105 tickets, and with the Yankees, A-Rod and Cano putting game tickets and signed memorabilia up for raffle the event was a success. Cano and Rodriguez also kicked in signed baseballs for Nicholas to enjoy when he grows up.

"They were both extremely generous with their time," Joanna said of the players. "(But I was) taken aback by the generosity of this stranger, because I didn't know Chris before all of this. To have a stranger be so generous on top of this was overwhelming."

Following the event, A-Rod shared photos of himself, Cano, Scandaglia and Joanna and Nicholas with his 805,000-plus Facebook fans.

May is ALS Awareness month. To learn more about ALS, or to help a family like the Chiarullis, you can visit Scandaglia's website, [www.Chris4Lou.com](http://www.Chris4Lou.com), or the Greater New York chapter of the ALS Association at [www.als-nyc.org](http://www.als-nyc.org).

If you'd like to help Joanna and Nicholas you can contact Joseph Campanaro, 22 Canterbury Ave., Staten Island, NY, 10314.

**Gratuitous photo of the week**

Be on the lookout in NYC area bars and hangouts as SNY introduces its latest 'Beer Money' beauty — Mayleen Ramey — beginning Monday.

**S**NY's award-winning broadcasting team — Keith Hernandez, Ron Darling and Gary Cohen — ventures out to the Pepsi Porch in right field for the first time this season to call Mets-Phillies on Wednesday night at Citi Field.

"It's a different way to watch a game. I love it," Hernandez told the Rumble from his usual perch behind home plate. "It's a nice break. I feel like this is more of our job. In there, it's like we're sitting in the stands like a fan."

Team SNY gave the Pepsi Porch experience rave reviews in their inaugural appearance there on July 20, when Angel Pagan's walk-off home run right underneath them beat the Cardinals.

# THE RUMBLE

AN OFF-THE-BALL LOOK AT YOUR FAVORITE SPORTS CELEBRITIES

## Carry the porch

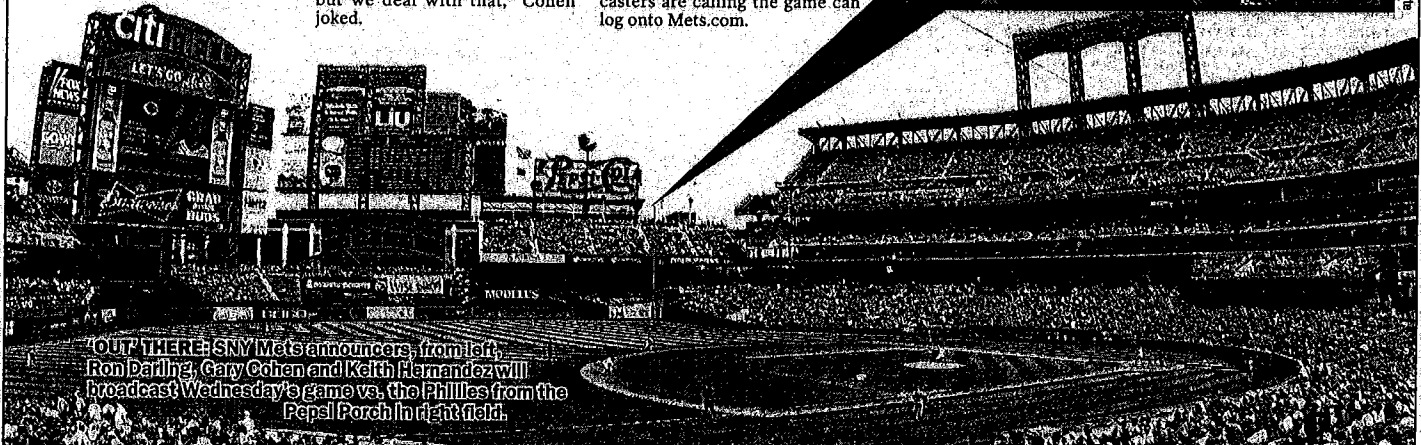
SNY team returns to outfield for broadcast

"There are dangers of letting Keith loose amongst the public, but we deal with that," Cohen joked.

Fans wishing to purchase tickets near where the SNY broadcasters are calling the game can log onto Mets.com.



N.Y. Post photo by [unreadable]



OUT THERE: SNY Mets announcers, from left, Ron Darling, Gary Cohen and Keith Hernandez will broadcast Wednesday's game vs. the Phillies from the Pepsi Porch in right field.

### PROGRAM COUNTS YOUR GOLF STEPS, OF COURSE

New York-based Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) and the PGA of America have teamed up for the health and fitness initiative "Let's Move on Course," encouraging golfers to walk the course while playing in an effort to lead healthier lifestyles. This week, HSS launched an interactive website dedicated to the program that allows players to track steps taken and calories burned while playing golf. At [www.hss.edu/golf](http://www.hss.edu/golf) players can create personalized "walking" accounts to track their progress daily with total steps updated automatically. Visitors also have the option of tracking scores for rounds of golf throughout the year, watching instructional videos and viewing tips to stay healthy on the course. ... Tuesday will be Jay Motola Day at Glen Arbor Golf Club in Bedford, where the affable executive director of the Met Golf Association will be saluted for his hard work and commitment to New York-area golf. Past "Traditions of Golf" honorees at Glen Arbor include Gary Player, golf pro Dennis Walters and columnist Dave Anderson.

### WEBSITE CONTEST OFFERS 1-ON-1 LESSONS

Yankees hitting coach Kevin Long — along with Barry Larkin, Tom Glavine, Jack Cust and softball star Jennie Finch — are going to be webcast instructors for [www.ClubDiamond-Nation.com](http://www.ClubDiamond-Nation.com) starting this summer. To introduce

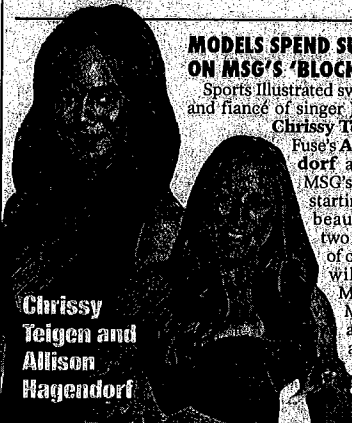
the site, they are participating in a contest where a winner can get a 1-on-1 lesson at Diamond Nation complex in Flemington, N.J. \$25,000 is being donated to charity, with the player getting the most votes earning the biggest contribution. No cost to vote.

### FANS SCORE BIG ON CYCLONES SCOREBOARD

The Brooklyn Cyclones' new Social Scoreboard just launched a few weeks ago and is the first of its kind anywhere in the Metro area. It gives fans a chance to win prizes by tapping into social networking platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Foursquare. People can "like" or share posts, check in at MCU Park, send tweets using certain hash tags or retweet messages directly from the team's Twitter feeds. For every fan who "checks in" to MCU Park using Foursquare before each home game, the team will randomly choose one fan to throw out the first pitch before that game. At the end of the season, the grand prize for whoever has the highest number of points is a trip for two to Mets 2013 spring training. Fans can sign up for free at [www.cyclonesocialscoreboard.com](http://www.cyclonesocialscoreboard.com).

### MODELS SPEND SUMMER ON MSG'S 'BLOCK PARTY'

Sports Illustrated swimsuit model, and fiancée of singer John Legend, Chrissy Teigen will join Fuse's Allison Hagendorf as co-host of MSG's Music Fridays starting June 1. The beauties are just two of a collection of celebrities who will appear on MSG between Memorial Day and Labor Day as the network kicks off its annual Summer Block Party lineup featuring themed programming every night of the week. The nights include: Movie Mondays & Tuesdays, hosted by Michael Rapaport; Countdown Wednesdays featuring the all-new show "MSG Countdown: Celebrity Edition" with episodes hosted by Justin Tuck, Edie Falco, Jerry Ferrara, and the Beastie Boys' Mike D and Adam Horowitz; Knicks Thursdays featuring Anthony Mason and Derek Harper in the 25-part series "Knicks Greatest Rivalries"; Music Fridays with concerts by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Florence and the Machine, Pink and Coldplay; Saturday Night Originals, including new episodes of "MSG's Vault"; and Sunday Night Fights.



Chrissy Teigen and Allison Hagendorf

### GEHRIG DINNER TOUCHES CANO

The sixth annual Lou Gehrig Dinner was held last Sun-

day at Yankee Stadium and attended by Alex Rodriguez and Robinson Cano. The dinner was run by Chris Scandaglia, who lost his grandfather

to ALS in 1990 and this year raised over \$10,000 for the family of Nick Chiarulli, who died of the disease in January at 32. Chiarulli's wife Joanna

and infant son Nicholas were in attendance and made an impact on Cano.

"Before I got to the Yankees, I didn't really know what

the disease was," Cano said. "Now, I hear about it, but until you meet the people who have to deal with it, you don't really understand how tough it is."

GET A TIP FOR US? EMAIL [THERUMBLE@NYPOST.COM](mailto:therumble@nypost.com)

**S**EEMS everything now comes with a price tag — the cost of compromise — a bitter additive that sours the good senses, reminding those who prefer to know the truth that nothing's as nice as we want it to be — or how it's shown on TV.

Cheating now is as synonymous with success as booze and karaoke. From corked bats to anabolic sluggers, from college stars who can hardly read or write, to high school principals who allow coaches to recruit players — children — from far, far away.

If everyone doesn't cheat, they should. After all, everyone else does. As we grow anesthetized to stories of those caught cheating, the taken-for-granted level rises until it becomes increasingly apparent that those who don't cheat are the fools — and those who object are Pollyanna.

Even if we were outraged by those revealed to be cheaters, we're not as outraged as we used to be. We're getting used to it. As prison inmates say about the food, "You can get used to anything."

This June 9 at Belmont should have been a fun, can't-wait, never-forget day. I'll Have Another trying to win the Triple Crown, the first since Affirmed, 34 years ago. It's one of those astronomy deals — you may never get another chance to see a comet.

But it already doesn't matter what the weather or track conditions will be. The course is stopped, the skies darkened by the better-late-than-never national knowledge that I'll Have Another's trainer, Doug O'Neill, has a lengthy track-record for drug violations and illegally administering substances to his horses — a reasonable person could consider this abuse — to get to the top, to cash in, and big.

Certainly O'Neill is not alone, not by, to borrow a track term, a long shot. He's just the latest in another sport that has allowed greed, neglect and cruelty to shove the sport from the sport.

**'ANOTHER' BUMMER:** The track record of drug violations by trainer Doug O'Neill (inset) sullies I'll Have Another's run for the Triple Crown.



# Phil Mushnick

phil.mushnick@nypost.com

**EQUAL TIME**

## RACY PAST

### O'Neill saddles us dopes with view of sports' dirty underbelly

Would O'Neill — last week suspended in his stable-state, California, for 45 days — be in position to win Saturday's Belmont Stakes had he not previously cheated, to pad his résumé? Hard to say for sure, but logic and history tell us that cheating helps trainers climb in the business, that it's worth a shot, then many more shots.

And, for what it's worth, I'll Have Another's owner, J. Paul Reddam, in the mortgage and loan business, has a bad rep among several state regulators who have accused him of loan-sharking.

But have O'Neill's past performances taken a lot of the fun out of this

Belmont Stakes? Absolutely, but only among those who still have a greater regard for the truth than for ignoring it, so as not to kill their fun. Let's not forget that long after it was fully and logically suspected that Barry Bonds was smashing juice-aided homers, many Giants' fans couldn't care less.

The O'Neill

case has allowed another example of how TV has no stomach for the truth, how it foolishly guards it from audiences, rather than shaming a sport to cleanse

itself from the inside, out — and protect horses from being destroyed. Consider that during its lengthy pre-race Kentucky Derby telecast, NBC had five on-camera ex-

pects. Yet, none said a word about any entered trainer's drug violations or suspensions.

O'Neill's pre-Derby rap sheet included a 15-day suspension in Illinois and double-digit drug violations, here and there. It's not likely coincidental that his horses' breakdown rate — and you know what they do to horses — is disturbingly high. Yet, in keeping with TV's Triple Crown tradition of ignoring the misdeeds of trainers, no one so much as mentioned it.

Not even in the many minutes after O'Neill's horse won the Derby did anyone at NBC have the stomach to even parenthetically mention O'Neill's past, as if no one wished to embarrass a guy for cheating.

Only before the Preakness — well after the horse racing media made noise and national news about O'Neill's recent past — did NBC note such truths, as if finally forced to tell such truths.

This Belmont should have been a gas, not another exercise in trying to enjoy a sports event in a morally compromised state, trying to watch under, over and past ugly truths and man-made stenches.

I'll be rooting for I'll Have Another. Not to win, but to make it back to the barn without breaking down.



UPI/AP

## Score one for SNY's new Mets score graphic

**HOORAY!** SNY has, at last, made its Mets score/inning/count graphic both readable and immediately decipherable. First, it was too small. Then, until Friday, the inning, at first glance, appeared to be the home team's score. Mets at Cardinals, no score in the

third, looked like Mets 0, Cards 3. The inning now sensibly follows the score.

➤ And Let Us Say, Eamon: ESPN, tomorrow at 1 p.m., carries the NCAA Division I lacrosse championship from Foxborough, Mass. **Eamon McAnaney**, familiar to

many as an SNY studio host and anchor, will call it. **McAnaney**, Notre Dame Class of '91, was the Irish's lacrosse captain and a four-year letterman. He's also a born-and-raised local.

So was **Eamon McEneaney**. He was a star, too, at Cornell, 35 years ago,

when Big Red won consecutive NCAA championships. **McEneaney**, a member of the Lacrosse Hall of Fame and the father of four, was a Cantor Fitzgerald employee, murdered in the 9/11 terror attacks.

➤ **NHL Network** last week aired a London

Knights-Edmonton Oil Kings CHL playoff game that included Edmonton's speedy playmaker **Max Domi**, son of Leafs and Rangers's mixed-breed — pug and boxer — **Tie Domi**. Max clearly takes after his mother.

➤ If you missed it, the

Mets' 1962 spring training "Yearbook" re-airs tomorrow on SNY at 5 p.m. It's fabulous. While **Bob Murphy** interviewed catcher **Hobie Landrith**, another veteran catcher, **Joe Ginsberg**, dropped a foul pop in front of them. So, with Ginsberg right there, **Murphy** next interviewed him.

# MIKE LUPICA



# Shooting from the LIP

# The Devils & Lou Lamoriello



Don't look now, but Lou Lamoriello has Devils in their fifth Stanley Cup Finals — and looking for their fourth title — in his tenure as general manager. Getty

**H**e is Lou Lamoriello, one of the great front-office figures we have ever had around here, the best of his time when you add it all up and remember where he started, three Stanley Cups with the Jersey Devils, working on four now that his team has beaten the Rangers, and he is standing at the back of the new press box at Madison Square Garden after the first period Wednesday night.

It is still 3-1 for the Devils then; what is still a 2-2 series at that point. But on this night, this point of the game, you can see and feel that the Rangers are coming on, which they sure were.

Somebody comes up to Lamoriello, shakes his hand, says, "I'm a great admirer of your work."

Lamoriello smiles and says, "You ought to know that we work real hard at that work."

Like his hockey team. For a long time. Run by a guy who took it over a quarter-century ago without any experience as a player or coach or general manager in the National Hockey League and made something lasting and real and great out of what was a joke at the time, one of the lost-boy franchises, an afterthought even in Jersey.

Made it into the San Antonio Spurs of the NHL.

Lamoriello looks at his phone the other night and sees a message from his friend Bobby Valentine. Before the night is over the Devils are up 3-2 in games and Friday

night they beat the Rangers, 3-2, and they go try to win another Stanley Cup for Lamoriello, and the Rangers do what they have done since their greatest hockey spring, in 1994, and that means they go home.

It is not their year, as sure as they were that it was, it is somebody else's, maybe the Devils, the most successful team in this area that nobody talks about until they play the Rangers. And beat them the way they did this time.

You saw how it ended Friday night if you watched the overtime, saw hockey once more be a sport of effort and luck and ultimately the bounce of the puck. That is how one season ends and another one goes on, all the madness around Henrik Lundqvist, still the best hockey player to never win a major.

Ilya Kovalchuk, a pretty great hockey player, is poking at the puck from Lundqvist's right and Lundqvist is down. Ryan McDonagh is on one side of Lundqvist and Brad Richards is behind him. But nobody can get control of the puck. Adam Henrique is there. The puck bounces off a skate and then somehow it goes between Lundqvist's legs and Richards can't get the puck out of there and Henrique puts it into the net.

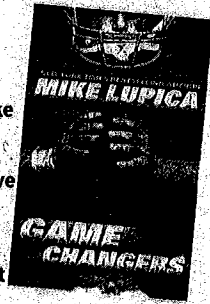
Just like that, at the end of all that, a puck moving all around the crease like that, the Rangers are gone. Minute and three into overtime in Game 6.

So now it is 18 years since the Rangers

won it all. Glen Sather has done some of his best work assembling this Rangers team, after all the success he had in Edmonton. But you wonder what happens over the last two decades, certainly the time since the Rangers won their last Stanley Cup, if Lamoriello had been working at the Garden instead of Jersey.

He hasn't been able to money-whip everybody the way the Yankees do, out-spending the world every year. Lamoriello has done what he has done mostly by being smart and tough and holding the whole thing together by himself sometimes. Working it the way the Devils do. This isn't about whether you're a big hockey fan or not. Just about the record of a very big big guy in his sport. Around here, best front office guy of his time.

**'Game Changers' is now Mike Lupica's 10th consecutive book to make the New York Times Best Seller List**



## A little Triple Crown frown, praise for King James & fix Nicks soon . . .

● It would be a lot more of a heartwarming story, I'll have another going for the Triple Crown. If the horse's trainer didn't seem to have a rap sheet on doping horses as long as the track at Belmont Park, right?

● Don't you sometimes get the idea that as great as **Dwyanne Wade** is, that if you take **Shaq** and **LeBron** away from him, he's **Joe Johnson**?

● This year's offseason savior for the Knicks — because there is always another one coming along — will almost certainly be **Steve Nash**.

● The thing about the Yankees that always makes you laugh out loud is this:

● As consistent as the way they spend money is that they have no sense of proportion, and even less perspective.

● And when they don't like something you write, the way they didn't like the Daily News story — a really good one — about how baseball sources and banking sources have them at least considering putting the team up for sale, they don't just lose perspective.

● They lose their minds.

● And scream at people, and threaten people, something they

executives often do when they get a case of hurt feelings, and generally act like head-bangers.

● Every time they do, the biggest team anywhere comes up looking small again.

● Here, by the way, is what passes for investigative reporting by those shooting down our story:

● They call Yankee executives and ask what they think.

● So it goes, for anybody who dares get on the wrong side of the company in a company town.

● There is a better chance of me getting on a space shuttle than there is of me seeing "Dark Shadows."

● Every time you hear people say

● LeBron James doesn't have the stomach for the big moments, make sure you refer them to Game 4 against the Pacers the other day, when he looked exactly like what he is, which means one of the great basketball players of all time.

● How can someone as gifted as **Rajon Rondo**, one who routinely makes such creative decisions with a basketball in his hands, sometimes turn into a guy who makes **J.R. Smith** look like a hoops savant?

● Every time I hear that a general manager, such as **Brian**

**Cashman** is part of a team meeting, I think that the guy's manager better stay on his toes.

● **Theo Epstein** was calling team meetings last year when **Terry Francona** was his manager, and you see what happened to Francona when he let the Boy Prince down in the end.

● Because the Red Sox collapsing that way sure wasn't going to be Epstein's fault, are you nuts?

● It really is kind of amazing that if the Yankee roster stays intact, they will have 17 players 30 or older by the end of the year.

● And seven over the age of 35.

● You know what building for the future generally means with the Yankees?

● Building for this August and September.

● Week in and week out, **Eric Stonestreet** of "Modern Family" gives the best comedic performance on television.

● I don't care if it's aliens against battleships in his next movie, if **Liam Neeson's** InIt, I'm all over it.

● NBC's **Pierre McGuire**, one of the best sideline guys anywhere, is right:

● That sing-song chanting of

● "Marty" at **Martin Brodeur** the other night in Game 5 was something as loud as you could ever hear at a college football game.

● If I was **DeMaurice Smith**, and I had handed over the store to **Roger Goodell** in collective bargaining, I'd try to change the subject with a col-lusion rap, too.

● I have complete confidence in **Jerry Reese**, always, but losing **Makeem Nicks** with a broken foot is a big deal for the defending Super Bowl champs.

● Seriously, we're going to go with a snap-by-snap analysis of **Sanchez** against **Tebow**?

● Because that will get really tired really fast.

● When I saw **"Hefner"** had pitched for the Mets the other night and then saw how he pitched, I really did think they'd given a start to Hugh.

● If I owned the Orlando Magic, I'd ask **Donnie Walsh** to come be my general manager.

● The show on Fox that would do **Mitt Romney** the most good, if the guy would loosen up a little — a tall order, I know — is **Don Imus**.

● If you have never read any of **Elmore Leonard's** westerns, do yourself a favor and pick up "Gunsights"

because it is as good as anything he has ever written.

● And since he's the best writer we have, that is saying plenty.

● I have the high honor in a couple of weeks of introducing the great **Pete Hamill** when he is inducted into the New York Writers Hall of Fame.

● Congratulations today to my pal, News Sunday Sports editor **Eric Barrow**, and his wife, who welcomed twin daughters — **Kay Emily** and **Brooke Barbara** — to the world this week.

● People don't care about men's tennis the way they did when I first started covering the sport, when it was **Borg** and **McEnroe** and **Connors**, and **Vitas** and **Vilas** and even **Nastase** still getting around pretty good.

● But with **Federer**, **Nadal**, **Djokovic**, you are talking about one of the great golden ages in the history of the sport.

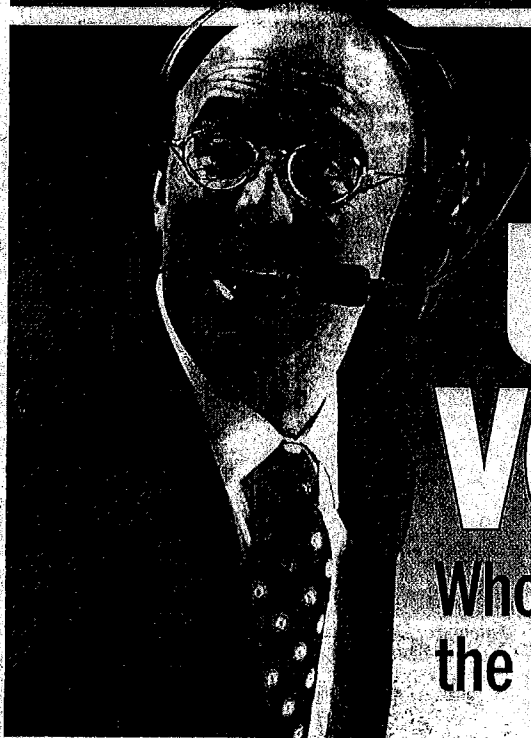
● You think **Alex Rodriguez** ever finds himself missing **Cousin Yuri**? **Marian Gaborik**, please pick up the white courtesy phone.

● The Mike Lupica Show can be heard Monday through Friday at noon on ESPN 98.7 FM.

CR-11

# MEDIA

By Bob Raissman



# PUMP UP THE VOLUME!

## Who gave Pierre McGuire the power of censorship?

**F**rom his position "Inside The Glass," between the two benches, NBC's Pierre McGuire is close to the action — too close.

Monday night during Game 4 of Rangers-Devils, he proved he has more consideration for coaches than he does for schlubs watching the games, the audience NBC allowed him to spit on. By now, you should know Rangers coach John Tortorella and Devils coach Peter DeBoer went nose-to-nose in a shouting match right under McGuire's beak.

This produced two revelations. 1) McGuire is not only a hockey analyst for NBC, but apparently a member of their Standards & Practices unit, too. 2) McGuire is protecting his access by withholding information he hears from his privileged perch.

McGuire has been criticized for not reporting the content of the obscene exchange between the two coaches. McGuire, Mr. Inside, is protecting coaches and players at the expense of viewers left on the outside looking in, literally.

While that's lame, taking it upon himself to hit the mute button on his microphone, so viewers could not hear what Snorts and DeBoer were saying, is even worse. McGuire has absolutely no right to dictate what fans can or cannot hear. He's paid to analyze a hockey game, not to engage in censorship.

And please, spare us from tired lines like: "Oh, he did the right thing. They were cursing. We wouldn't want kids to hear it." That's absolute garbage.

If the NHL and NBC suits have

a darn about the kiddies' "well being" they wouldn't continue to market violence at all hours of the day and night, promoting upcoming games with video of fights replete with blood flowing out a player's nose, mouth, or some other body part.

McGuire was too busy making decisions for the rest of us (or planning his schedule of upcoming talk show appearances) to consider the hypocrisy of his decision to play censor. Would Gary Bettman care if a few late evening F-Bombs got dropped on NBC Sports Network, a ratings-challenged cable outlet? At least one of the commissioner's decisions suggests he would not.

Bettman and his crew have editorial control over HBO's "24/7: Road to the Winter Classic." In the most recent edition, the league allowed an extremely vulgar verbal confrontation between Flyers coach Peter Laviolette and Stars alternate captain Steve Ott to air.

The Bettman regime has made the NHL a transparent TV property. Why do you think McGuire is allowed to do his analysis between the benches? Unlike most sideline reporters, who are glorified hood ornaments, McGuire is well embedded with the opportunity to hear stuff and report even more.

At least when he's not busy hiding information.

### COOL AS ICE

Or maybe this McGuire thing is about NBC not only telling its NHL voices to withhold information but to applaud players who do the same.

Why else would Jeremy Roenick, NBCSN's alleged studio analyst, genuflect to Zach Parise for blowing off the media after the Devils' Game 3 loss?

"Who cares if he (Parise) doesn't talk to the media," Roenick bellowed on Wednesday's pregame show. "So he doesn't want to talk to the media. Big deal. Give him a break."

We can only hope Roenick takes a cue from Parise and doesn't show up for his next studio appearance.

### GLOBAL STORM

As far as television goes, St. John's athletics, and the St. John's TV Network, are establishing a trend.

We'll make this simple. SJU has embarked on a project where SJTVN will produce HD telecasts — baseball, basketball, fencing, volleyball — over the Internet (no satellite or fiber necessary) for networks like SportsNet New York, ESPN3 and CBS Sports Network.

Major reason: Moo-la-dee. Working with the satellite hook-up and production truck would cost SJU \$45,000 per game. Last week SJU produced a three-game (baseball) series with Seton Hall for CBS Sports Network for the "minimal" cost of a few thousand dollars per game.

SJTVN uses a combination of students and professional technicians to work the telecasts. Mark Fratto, SJU's senior associate athletics director, is looking at SJTVN producing at least 100 HD games over the Internet.

"We used 2011 to test the entire operation," Fratto said. "Now

that we've worked the bugs out, my hope is to get wider distribution this year."

### PINSTRIPED SOUP

When it comes to pom-pom waving, pinstripe operatives, John (Pa Pinstripe) Sterling and Suzyn (Ma Pinstripe) Waldman's credentials are impeccable.

Incredibly, they've taken their devotion to another level. During Mark Teixeira's bronchial problems, Sterling explained a baseball player could not afford to rest in bed for a week.

"But if he could, I would personally deliver Mark chicken soup every day," Sterling said.

"I'd even make some," Ma replied. "I make great chicken soup."

Just don't allow Sterling to count the matzo balls.

### DOSE OF FEINSANITY

Mike (Sports Pope) Francesa must be slipping. He needed backup from two Yankees reporters — Sweeny Murri and The News' Mark Feinsand — on the balcony last Tuesday. Or maybe the pontiff is putting heat on Murti by giving a dose of Feinsanity. ... Boxing moles say Showtime has its eye on SNY's Brian (Mr.) Custer for Sho-Box blow-by-blow duties. Custer earned major style points when he worked "Broadway Boxing" cards.

Mike Breen dealt in a double standard Thursday in referring to ESPN's NBA studio show as "totally dysfunctional." What does that make MSG's Knicks studio show? Don't hold your breath waiting for Breen to characterize that misbegotten operation.

## DUDE OF THE WEEK

### LEBRON JAMES

When the Heat fell behind 2-1 to the Pacers last week, James — again — was trashed throughout a variety of media precincts. He was portrayed as gutless, a shrinking wonder, who eventually would crawl back to Cleveland. The King responded with a monster effort in Game 4. The flip-flopping was on. In the next round it will go the other way when James commits the mortal sin of not taking the final shot of a game. Then The King will present his loyal detractors with another gift. He will again become the No. 1 topic for Gasbags, filling hours and hours of hot air inside The Valley of the Stupid.



## DWEEB OF THE WEEK

### DEMAURICE SMITH

Seems like only yesterday when the NFLPA executive director was all smiles standing next to Roger Goodell celebrating a historic 10-year labor deal. The moment, filled with platitudes and self-congratulations, was well chronicled. Now, 10 months later Smith is dumping on his labor "partner," filing a multi-billion dollar collusion complaint in district court. Smith is labeling the NFL a "cartel." Smith wants it one way — his way. A deal is a deal. Or is it?

## DOUBLE TALK

### What Mark Teixeira said:

"I think I'd rather hit 39 home runs than 20 or 15. I would rather drive in 111 runs than 80 so I'm going to be more aggressive."

### What Mark Teixeira meant to say:

"Nothing is working so I'll try — or say — anything."



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