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## **Tigers' Anibal Sanchez, Omar Infante make The Trade look a ton better**

October 9, 2012

By Drew Sharp / Detroit Free Press

OAKLAND, Calif. -- An emotionally calmer and defensively cleaner Omar Infante doesn't hedge for a second when distributing the credit for finding his way out of a hole that could have buried him in Detroit.

He points to Jhonny Peralta's cubicle.

Peralta, the Tigers' shortstop for 2 1/2 seasons, found the pressure-release valve after Infante hit rock bottom three weeks ago. His throwing error gave the White Sox a decisive one-run lead in a crucial makeup game -- and a seemingly insurmountable three-game lead in the American League Central.

Infante felt the burden of the big trade with the Miami Marlins that brought him and right-handed starter Anibal Sanchez to the Tigers before July's deadline. Every unproductive at-bat, every clumsily squandered double play only increased the weight of enormous expectations.

Infante wasn't alone in feeling the squeeze.

Sanchez did as well. He struggled so much after his first couple of starts that the Tigers skipped his turn in the rotation.

Within the context of recent Tigers deadline deals, Sanchez looked less like Doug Fister and more like Jarrod Washburn.

But now The Trade's looking much better.

Infante hasn't committed an error since that gloomy Monday afternoon in Chicago. He has looked much smoother at second. Sanchez, who gets the starting nod in today's potential series clincher, has been the Tigers' most effective starter the past two weeks.

Peralta has a theory why the former Marlins were fish out of water at first:

"It's hard when you come here from a new team and people are expecting a lot from you and you wind up doing too much. I think both of them got caught up in that. It took time for them to get comfortable with a new team. But it was important that they relaxed, because we know they're great players."

The Tigers surrendered top pitching prospect Jacob Turner and catcher Rob Brantly in the deal, seeking to fill two significant voids -- improved rotation depth and an everyday second baseman who could bat better than .200.

Infante got two hits in the Tigers' 5-4 Game 2 victory over Oakland. And both came with two outs, giving Miguel Cabrera at-bats with runners on base rather than leading off an inning.

"This is a team that makes it easy to fit in," said Infante, 30, also a Tiger in 2002-07. "They've been very helpful in getting you to relax and focus on doing your job the best you can."

The best deadline trades are the ones that resulted in the playoffs.

The 1987 deal that brought Doyle Alexander from Atlanta and the 2011 move with Seattle that brought Fister rank at the top of recent deadline acquisitions. The deals in 2009 for left-hander Washburn and first baseman/alleged clutch hitter Aubrey Huff were envisioned as the finishing pieces.

Washburn was one of the league leaders in ERA when he came to Detroit. He seemed a perfect fit considering the spacious left-center confines of Comerica Park. And Huff was branded a reliable RBI producer.

If either did anything -- repeat, anything -- in their limited weeks, the Tigers would be a three-time playoff team in the past four years.

It just reaffirms that there are no guarantees with trades, regardless of the players' history.

"I don't pitch bad in the National League," Sanchez said, "so they told me to feel comfortable on the mound and try to do my best, and just focus on the next pitch. That's why I worked better in my last six or seven starts."

Many in the organization categorize Sanchez's three-hit shutout against Kansas City on Sept. 25 two days after a doubleheader loss to Minnesota as the catalyst for the team's stretch run. General manager Dave Dombrowski acquired Sanchez knowing he possibly was only a rental. At 28, he is a free agent after this season. (Infante is signed through next season.) But Sanchez's strong finish has widely opened the Tigers' eyes to the possibility of trying to sign him.

He makes \$8 million. He could command an outrageous raise in the open market, especially if the Yankees and Dodgers throw their blank checkbooks into the fray.

"You know what?" he said. "I'm the person that thinks day to day. I don't try to be ahead on anything. Right now, I just focus on what I'm going to do tomorrow.

"(Free agency) I know is coming, but that's my agent's job. That's why I have an agent. I don't think too much about what's going to happen after that."

The Kansas City Star reported Monday that Sanchez topped the Royals' free-agent list. They won't be the only team seriously courting him.

But Sanchez and Infante finally look comfortable in their new surroundings.

## **Al Albuquerque's kiss added spark to frigid, emotionless sport**

October 9, 2012

By Drew Sharp / Detroit Free Press

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Unless the A's really want some suggestions on what to kiss, they should give the nonsense surrounding Al Albuquerque's playful baseball peck a rest. The Tigers insisted Monday that the reliever meant no disrespect when he kissed the baseball after fielding a grounder for the third out in the top of the ninth in Game 2.

But even if his intent was deliberately showing up the A's, what's the big deal?

You're ticked off about a little kiss?

Showmanship abounds in sports. If you're not bringing added attention to yourself, you're not trying. NFL wide receivers have turned the end zone into their own scripted voyage into megalomania. Spiking the ball after scoring a touchdown no longer suffices. You must have choreography worthy of "Dancing With the Stars." After an impressive dunk, NBA players release primal yells. NHL players raise their stick and a skate into the air and do a one-legged jig after scoring a goal. And more than a few baseball sluggers have stood at home plate admiring their work a little longer than usual.

Tiger Woods ... you know, back when he was Tiger Woods ... pumped his fist, his face contorting whenever he dropped a big putt in a major championship ... you know, back when he won major championships. Such displays were the antithesis of accepted conservative golf decorum. The old guard considered it tacky and in bad taste.

What Albuquerque did was nothing compared with the competition.

Who is Josh Reddick to stand as judge and jury in regards to respecting the game after he showed up the home-plate umpire by angrily flipping his bat after a disputed called third strike?

Tigers catcher Gerald Laird shook his head in disbelief at the notion that Albuquerque's kiss somehow violated unwritten baseball protocol.

"There are far worse things in trying to show up somebody than what he did," Laird said. "It's not like some of those things that people do, that you see and you know immediately what they're doing. With this, I was probably like everybody else, wondering if I really saw what I thought I saw."

What's funny about this "controversy" is that many pan baseball as stodgy, programmed, emotionless and devoid of any spontaneity. It's lost in a time warp, unwilling to embrace modernization. But I wonder how many of those who have chastised the game for its grandfatherly demeanor also are ripping Albuquerque for not fully respecting the game simply because he displayed a little of that missing emotion?

"You move on," said Oakland manager Bob Melvin. "It's not a big deal to me."

The A's are mad because they're trailing, 0-2, in this series, one loss shy of elimination. They're mad because of the one-time scheduling reconfiguration that put the team with home-field advantage in a best-of-five series on the road for the first two games. They're mad because they think the strike zone was rigged against their favor at Comerica Park. They're mad because their underdog story risks an anti-fairy tale ending.

And they're taking it out on a stupid, insignificant kiss.

Maybe it's karma kicking back.

This is the major league birthplace of one of baseball's original showboats. It's believed that Reggie Jackson was the first to strike a home-plate pose after launching one of his prodigious blasts at the Coliseum in the 1970s.

"It was an emotional response," Laird said. "That was a hard-fought game that went back and forth in the final innings. He had just gotten a huge out. That was nothing compared to what other relievers do."

After all, a kiss was tame compared with Jose Valverde's ritualistic antics every appearance.

## Three reasons Tigers can't assume series with A's is over

October 9, 2012

By John Lowe / Detroit Free Press

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Even though they need to win one of the next three games to eliminate the Athletics, and even though the third of those games would be started by Justin Verlander, there are several reasons to suspect the Tigers won't have an easy time finishing off this first-round series.

Here are three of the most prominent reasons:

- The Tigers didn't pound the ball to win the first two games. Of the eight runs they scored, one scored on a solid hit: Alex Avila's home run.
- Tigers reliever Joaquin Benoit -- with a 14.54 ERA in his past five outings -- is going through his latest struggle of his homer-plagued second half of the season.
- While the Tigers must win one of the next three, all three are in Oakland. Only last week, the A's had to win three straight at home to win something. And they did just that, sweeping the two-time defending AL champion Texas Rangers in swashbuckling style to win the AL West.

That sweep of Texas capped a 6-0 home stand for Oakland. Don't look for the A's to get worried if they are behind at midgame tonight, either. They have that late-inning feeling at home -- like a football team that thinks it will win entering the fourth quarter. The A's had 14 walk-off victories this season.

That's why it would be especially helpful for Benoit to regain the form he had in this round of the playoffs last season. In two appearances covering 3 2/3 innings, he allowed the Yankees one run.

If you compare that Benoit to the current one, you might see that he's opening up too soon with his lower half in his windup. That could lead to his arm dropping and his leaving more pitches up. Leaving pitches up could help explain why he has allowed 14 home runs since June 30. So Benoit might be a simple mechanical correction away from returning to his shutdown effectiveness.

Benoit faltered in each of his final three appearances of the regular season. Then in Game 1 against Oakland, he gave up a long fly ball to Brandon Moss that came within feet of being the tying homer. In Game 2, he allowed the tying run on a single, two steals and a wild pitch, then allowed the go-ahead run on a homer to Josh Reddick.

Deep drives like that weren't central to the Tigers' offense in the first two games. Consider the plays on which their runs scored.

- Game 1: A double-play grounder (after two hits off the gloves of A's infielders), a tapper to the right side that pitcher Jarrod Parker knocked past first base as he went to field it and Avila's homer.
- Game 2: Another tapper to the right side of the infield, a two-run error when centerfielder Coco Crisp dropped Miguel Cabrera's fly ball, a wild pitch and Don Kelly's sacrifice fly.

Left-handed starters generally had more success against the Tigers than right-handed starters. Manager Jim Leyland said Monday he would use the same lineup tonight against A's left-handed starter Brett Anderson that he did against left-hander Tommy Milone in Game 2. That means Omar Infante (three hits in the series) in the second spot, Avisail Garcia in right and Gerald Laird at catcher.

Milone allowed one run in six innings in Game 2 and seldom was in trouble. He was in line to be the winner when he turned the game over to the bullpen in the seventh. And if Crisp hadn't dropped Cabrera's ball, he might have been the winner.

The worst attitude for the Tigers to take is that they don't have to win Game 3 or 4 because they have Verlander for Game 5. Tim McCarver, the catcher on the Cardinals, believes his team made a mistake like that when it needed to win only one of its last three games from the Tigers in the 1968 World Series. The Cardinals knew they had ace Bob Gibson in his greatest year to pitch Game 7 after he overwhelmed the Tigers in Games 1 and 4. Mickey Lolich and the Tigers beat Gibson, 4-1, to win Game 7.

During Monday's midafternoon workout on the A's field, Verlander threw off the bullpen mound. It was his throwing session between starts. The Tigers hope that's the only time they will see him on a mound on this visit to Oakland. They hope his next start will be in Game 1 of the American League Championship Series on Saturday against Baltimore or New York.

But the date of Verlander's next start hinges on a lot of things he doesn't control. Those include the Tigers' offense, the return of the vintage Benoit, and the return of the A's to the home where they won a bunch of games in a row to finish their amazing regular season.

## **Tigers' Anibal Sanchez, Athletics' Brett Anderson overcome obstacles to pitch Game 3**

October 9, 2012

By Shawn Windsor / Detroit Free Press

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Anibal Sanchez has a good story to tell. Brett Anderson has a better one.

Sanchez had to adapt to a new team, a new league and an extra batter to face in the lineup this season. Anderson had to overcome Tommy John surgery.

The starting pitchers will face off tonight in Game 3 of the American League Division Series as Detroit attempts to sweep Oakland -- the Tigers won the first two -- and the A's try to get back in the series.

Sanchez struggled his first several starts. But in the last month of the regular season, the right-handed control pitcher settled into his new clubhouse, learned to work with the Tigers' catchers, began to get a feel for the AL -- he had come from the Miami Marlins in the National League -- and began to relax.

He allowed one run combined in his last two starts. Of his past eight starts, he had one bad outing -- when he gave up six runs against the A's at home Sept. 20.

Sanchez credits no one in particular for the turnaround.

"I think it's everybody (who) helped me," he said, "the pitching coach, the starting pitchers, (Justin) Verlander and the rest of the guys. They helped me a lot. (The) Latin guys told me if I (can) do my job in the National League, I have to do it here ... they told me to feel comfortable on the mound, try to do my best and just focus on every pitch. And that's what I start doing, that's why I work better in my last six or seven starts."

Anderson, a left-hander, didn't make his first start until Aug. 21 as he recovered from elbow surgery. He pitched well immediately, giving up one run in seven innings against the Twins. He was even better the next three starts, giving up one earned run in 19 innings.

"He's got Cy Young-type stuff," A's outfielder Jonny Gomes said.

He had a hiccup against the Angels in mid-September, then suffered a strained oblique against the Tigers on Sept. 19. He pitched just 2 1/3 innings that game and gave up three runs.

Anderson hasn't pitched since, but he's healthy again.

"I'm good," he said Monday. "It wasn't ideal getting hurt again, but I feel good and the postseason -- who knows when we're going to get back here ... but you have to put the knicks and knacks away and get ready to play because everybody has them at this point."

Anderson said he doesn't know what to expect when he starts tonight for the first time in three weeks.

"But it's going to be fun," he said. "This series is kind of a microcosm of our season. This team has handled adversity better than any team I've seen, so you wouldn't expect anything less."

In six starts, Anderson has a 2.57 ERA. Sanchez has a 3.74 ERA, but considering his number ballooned to 4.52 in mid-August, 3.74 looks pretty good.

Sanchez has pitched so well that he has put himself in a solid position for the winter when he becomes a free agent, something he said he isn't thinking about.

"I'm a person that thinks day to day," he said. "Right now I'm just focused on what I'm doing tomorrow. The only thing I care (about) is I want to finish my postseason out."

That begins tonight in a converted football stadium that will be packed and loud, a place where Sanchez hasn't pitched.

"I don't try to focus on how it's going to be," he said. "I try to focus to put my ball for a strike, get it hit by hitter. That's what I do."

And that is a good story, too.



## Tigers pitching striking out A's like poetry in motion

October 9, 2012

By John Lowe / Detroit Free Press

OAKLAND, Calif. -- The Athletics are striking out a lot in the American League Division Series. That's not a surprise, for three reasons: one that deals with the Tigers' pitching staff, one that deals with the A's -- and one that deals with a 19th Century poem.

The Tigers set a team record for strikeouts by their staff this season.

The A's struck out more often than any other AL team.

So this is perhaps a predictable case of bat not meeting ball.

In the first two games of the series against Oakland, Tigers' pitchers recorded 23 strikeouts.

Justin Verlander, who just repeated as the major league strikeout champion, recorded 11 strikeouts in Game 1.

Doug Fister baffled the A's for eight strikeouts in Game 2.

The Tigers' bullpen added four strikeouts over those two games.

Oakland's Josh Reddick struck out 151 times during the season. In each game of this series, he has struck out three times. According to Baseball-Reference.com, he's the first player to strike out at least three times in consecutive postseason games against the Tigers.

Maybe the residue of baseball's most famous poem has afflicted the A's. Nearly 125 years ago, Ernest Lawrence Thayer penned "Casey At The Bat" and set it in a town called Mudville.

More than one real place has been called Mudville at some point. One is Stockton, Calif. Stockton is about a 75-mile drive from Oakland. The A's have a farm club there.

Hmm. The A's have a farm club in what might be the same town where the Mighty Casey struck out. Perhaps it's no wonder they are striking out, too.

History lesson? If you think Reddick is striking out a lot now ...

In last year's playoffs, Tigers leadoff hitter Austin Jackson struck out three times in three straight games. He's the only player in postseason history to do that, according to Baseball-Reference.com. Yet through all of that lack of contact, manager Jim Leyland steadfastly stuck with him in the leadoff spot, where contact usually is a priority. It's the same type of this-is-our-team loyalty Leyland is now showing in keeping Joaquin Benoit firmly in the eighth-inning setup role.

For starters ...

Al Kaline, who has seen 59 Tigers seasons, was asked what he liked best about how the Tigers were playing right now.

"Our pitching has been fantastic, our starting pitching particularly," Kaline said.

From Sept. 1 through their Oct. 1 clinching of the division, the Tigers went 17-for-29 in quality starts. That's 59% -- 9% above the league average for the season. (Just about one in every two starts made by an AL pitcher this season was a quality start -- one in which the pitcher goes at least six innings and gives up three earned runs or fewer.)

Verlander and Fister have turned in quality starts in each of the first two playoff games. So have their opponents -- Jarrod Parker and Tommy Milone. That fits with this observation Kaline makes now about postseason play: "It's pitching and defense and two key hits in a game. That's usually the way it comes out. You're not going to score a lot of runs. For whatever reason, the pitchers bear down more, concentrate more."

Notebook: Rick Porcello, who hasn't pitched in a week and is in the bullpen, threw off the mound during Monday's workout. So did Max Scherzer, the scheduled Game 4 starter. ... Don Kelly had so many congratulatory messages on his game-winning RBI on Sunday that as of midafternoon Monday he said he still had 50 messages on his phone he hadn't had time to read.

## **Athletics' Stephen Drew, finally healthy, gets second chance at postseason**

October 9, 2012

By Anthony Fenech & Shawn Windsor / Detroit Free Press

All Stephen Drew could do was roll around on his scooter.

This time last year, the Oakland A's starting shortstop was the Arizona Diamondbacks' sidelined shortstop, after a midseason knee injury knocked him out for the year and out of the picture as the Diamondbacks went from worst to first in the National League West and into the playoffs.

"It really was tough," Drew said. "Not being able to play in the postseason and sitting there on the bench watching in a scooter with a foot brace kind of deal, it was tough."

A year later, after rehabbing his right knee and getting traded from Arizona to Oakland in late August, he's part of another underdog story, this time on the field.

"It's something special," he said over the weekend. "Just looking back at all the hard work that went into it, working out every day and getting back to game shape, it's special to have an opportunity to play in the playoffs."

Drew hit .193 before the trade with Arizona, .250 after the trade with the A's and is 2-for-9 with a double in the American League Division Series against the Tigers.

In each of the first two games, Drew made impressive plays in the field and, with a mutual club option for 2013, could be a potential Tigers' free-agent target if the sides don't agree and the Tigers cut ties with current shortstop Jhonny Peralta.

But for now, he's focused on enjoying his second trip to the postseason, because he found out firsthand that another trip is never guaranteed.

"I'll probably remember this more than my first trip in 2007," he said.

He was in his first full season then. Now he is reunited with former Diamondbacks manager Bob Melvin and former Triple-A manager Chip Hale. Melvin is Oakland's manager and Hale a coach.

Drew said both helped in his transition with the A's.

"They helped big-time," he said. "But just the guys on this team, I mean, really, I can't say that enough. These guys are great guys, and they go out and play hard every day, and that's all you can ask for."

**LEARNING CURVE:** The A's signed former Tiger Brandon Inge in late April to play third base, as rookie Josh Donaldson struggled to make the major league transition from catcher to the hot corner.

But while Inge battled injuries and ultimately was lost for the season Sept. 1, he has taken an interest in Donaldson's play at third.

"He's definitely improved," Inge said after the A's lost Game 2. "He's a young, raw talent, but he's pretty good over there."

Donaldson said Inge has helped him mostly with positioning, and Inge said some of his advice goes in one ear and out the other.

"That's part of what makes him good, too," Inge said. "He's just one of those guys that's very talented, so it's hard to help him with a lot."

Donaldson, who hit .290 with eight home runs since taking over as the everyday third baseman Aug. 14, is 1-for-7 in the ALDS.

**Fan appreciation:** The A's might be facing elimination tonight, but Melvin hopes a change of venue will change his team's fortunes. The Oakland Coliseum is a multipurpose stadium that doesn't offer much home-field advantage when it's mostly empty, as it was early in the season.

But that changed as the A's made a run for the West Division title late in the season and reached a crescendo last weekend when the A's swept Texas in three games to clinch.

Melvin expects the place to be full and loud tonight.

"We saw that last weekend, and I think it really, really helped us," he said. "They were involved. When the place is packed, it's about as loud as it gets. So it has an affect on us. We appreciate it."

**Play for the day:** Melvin said he thinks his team can draw on the last month of the season as it faces three must-win games.

"We played some very dramatic games that we lost and were able to come back and win the next day," he said. "Our mantra has been let's play for the day, let's not worry about tomorrow. If we have a nice win, we'll ride the momentum of that. If we have a loss, we'll separate and put it aside and go out and play. And this group has been about as good a group of doing that as I've been around."

## **Tigers vs. A's: John Lowe scouts Game 3 pitching matchup**

October 9, 2012

By John Lowe / Detroit Free Press

RH Anibal Sanchez

Key stats: 4-6, 3.74 ERA with the Tigers.

Quality starts: 8-for-12 with the Tigers.

The buzz: Overall this season with the Marlins and Tigers, Sanchez made 22 quality starts -- one more than acclaimed hurlers Cliff Lee, Felix Hernandez, Jered Weaver and Matt Cain. Until the final two weeks of the season, the Tigers had won one game in which they scored two runs or fewer. Then they won two games, both pitched by Sanchez -- a three-hit, 2-0 victory over the Royals that allowed the Tigers to catch the White Sox, and 6 1/3 innings of one-run pitching in Minnesota that led to a 2-1 victory that clinched a tie for the American League Central championship.

Key hitter for Sanchez: Josh Reddick. He's hitting well under .200 since Sept. 1, and has struck out six times in this series. But the left-handed-hitting Reddick led the A's with 32 home runs in the regular season, and as he showed against Joaquin Benoit in the eighth inning of Game 2, he's still a homer threat now.

LH Brett Anderson

Key stats: 4-2, 2.57.

Quality starts: 4-for-6.

The buzz: Anderson missed much of the season recovering from ligament-replacement surgery in his pitching elbow. "He was a power guy before the surgery," said Mark Gubicza, the former Royals right-hander who is now the Angels' TV analyst. "He still has a pretty good fastball in the 91-94 (m.p.h.) range. He has a good slow curve and a good change." Anderson, 24, is the only nonrookie in the A's playoff rotation. He will be making his first start since suffering a strained right oblique in a start against the Tigers at Comerica Park three weeks ago.

Key hitter for Anderson: Delmon Young. If the left-handed Anderson works around Miguel Cabrera and then gets out lefty-swinging cleanup man Prince Fielder, he might have to retire No. 5 hitter Young to get out of the inning. Young is 4-for-10 lifetime off Anderson with a double and two RBIs.

## **Tigers ticker: Tigers' Game 2 sets several records for MLB Network**

October 9, 2012

By Brian Manzullo / Detroit Free Press

MLB Network's first postseason broadcast -- the Tigers' 5-4 victory over the A's in Sunday's Game 2 -- set several records for the 4-year-old outlet.

- Most-viewed telecast: 1.3-million viewers, up 107% over the previous high, Yankees vs. Red Sox on Oct. 2.
- Highest-ever coverage rating: 1.3, 63% greater than the previous high (June 8, 2010, debut of Stephen Strasburg).
- By far its highest-rated game telecast in Detroit (644% better than the previous best) and Oakland/San Francisco (280% higher than previous best).

Meanwhile, TBS is averaging 3.6-million viewers through its first three days of playoff coverage, 14% higher than its first three days in 2011, based on Fast National data from Nielsen.

Social media comments about the postseason already have surpassed the total from the 2011 division series. Through Sunday, there were 1.34-million public Facebook and Twitter comments versus 1.28 million for the entire 19-game division series last year, according to data from Bluefin Labs.

ALCS tickets on sale today

Tickets for American League Championship Series games at Comerica Park go on sale at 10 a.m. today.

If the Tigers and Yankees advance, Comerica Park would host Game 3 on Oct. 16, Game 4 on Oct. 17 and Game 5 on Oct. 18 (if necessary). If the Orioles advance, the Tigers would host Game 1 on Saturday, Game 2 on Sunday, Game 6 on Oct. 20 (if necessary) and Game 7 on Oct. 21 (if necessary).

For more information and to order, call 866-66-TIGER or visit [tigers.com](http://tigers.com).

Tidbits from Mario Impemba

Tigers broadcaster Mario Impemba joined [freep.com](http://freep.com) for a live chat Monday. Here are a couple of highlights (read the full transcript online):

- On whether he thinks manager Jim Leyland will be back next season: "I think he will be back. He still seems to have the passion to manage, and he loves this city. The park is full every night, Mr. Ilitch is not afraid to spend money, and it's a winning atmosphere."
- On who he'd like to see the Tigers play in the ALCS: "My honest opinion is that I think the Tigers can beat anyone."

## Brandon Inge wants A's to stew about Al Albuquerque's kiss

October 9, 2012

By Shawn Windsor / Detroit Free Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — In one clubhouse few wanted to talk about the kiss. In the other clubhouse Brandon Inge happily discussed it.

And why not?

Inge, the former Tigers and current (but injured) Athletics third baseman, did a double take when he saw Al Albuquerque kiss the baseball after the reliever snagged a comebacker before he tossed it to first base late in Sunday's Game 2 of the American League Division Series between Detroit and Oakland.

"I just went, 'Oh, my goodness,'" Inge said Monday, laughing as he thought of Albuquerque, a free-spirited personality. "I know him. I know he didn't mean much by it, but I'm sure he's gonna regret it."

To make sure Albuquerque does, Inge said he wasn't going to tell his new teammates the truth about Albuquerque's tendency to live on his own planet. Inge wants his young A's to stew.

"I'm sure these guys aren't laughing and I'm just gonna let it stir 'em up," Inge said.

The strategy was working Monday afternoon as the A's prepared for their off-day workout at the Oakland Coliseum.

Said A's outfielder Jonny Gomes, who found nothing funny in the kiss: "(There) are baseball gods that take care of that kind of stuff. Obviously, he doesn't believe in baseball gods, but I do."

Tigers manager Jim Leyland wasn't asked whether he believed in baseball gods, but he was asked whether — as an "old-school" skipper — he thought there was a place for such antics.

"No, I don't think it was the right thing to do," Leyland said. "I will sit here today and I will not try to defend it.

"I will say that I can assure everybody, including the Oakland A's, that Albuquerque did nothing intentionally to offend the Oakland A's."

The relief pitcher, who missed most of the season recovering from elbow surgery, said he was just excited when he planted his lips on the ball.

"I did it in the emotion of the game," he said.

This is why his teammates aren't too upset with him. Mostly they just found it amusing and typical for a teammate then know as unpredictably goofy.

"We have been kidding with him and joking with him and having fun with it," said Tigers catcher Gerald Laird, who admitted that he too, like Inge, did a double take when he saw the kiss.

"I thought, 'Did I just see what I thought I saw?'" Laird said, chuckling.

Laird said a teammate or two might have a practical joke planned for Albuquerque, a 26-year-old right-hander from San Pedro de Macoris in the Dominican Republic. Laird said he had never seen a celebration that creative from a relief pitcher. He also said he was certain Albuquerque wouldn't do it again.

"He's taken a lot," Laird said. "We've addressed it."

Laird said third baseman Miguel Cabrera and relievers Octavio Dotel and Jose Valverde all talked to him. Wait. Valverde?

"Yeah, right," Laird said, smiling at the image of the Tigers' flamboyant closer — who has been criticized for irritating opponents with his celebratory dances and fist pumps — giving advice to a pitcher who kisses a ground ball.

Then again, Laird said, this is kind of the point, that this is a new part of the game.

"If you want to start getting into that stuff then you've gotta get into all the closers in the league that show up the hitters when they get guys out," he said. "Look at (Grant) Balfour."

The A's closer offers his own brand of peacocking around the mound late in games. When asked what he thought of the kiss, Balfour said, "I didn't see it. I was in the bullpen."

But when asked what he thought, he offered:

"If that's what he did and they lose three games here it's gonna come back and bite him. Maybe it will, maybe it won't. We will see what happens."

Indeed we will.

Said Laird: "If they want to use it for motivation, more power to them."

## **Tigers will repeat Game 2 lineup for Tuesday's Game 3 vs. Athletics**

October 9, 2012

By Brian Manzullo / Detroit Free Press

Detroit Tigers manager Jim Leyland confirmed Monday in Oakland that, for Game 3, he'll stick with the same lineup he used in Game 2 with another left-hander on the mound for the Athletics.

That would be:

1. CF Austin Jackson
2. 2B Omar Infante
3. 3B Miguel Cabrera
4. 1B Prince Fielder
5. DH Delmon Young
6. SS Jhonny Peralta
7. LF Andy Dirks
8. RF Avisail Garcia
9. C Gerald Laird

(Technically, positions could still be determined, but that should at least be the batting order.)

The Tigers, like Game 2, are facing a left-hander in Brett Anderson (4-2, 2.57 ERA). Anderson started six games in the regular season and was almost held out of Game 3 because of an oblique injury.

Right-hander Anibal Sanchez (9-13, 3.86 ERA) gets the start for Detroit.

## **Tigers' lead over A's is unprecedented; ALCS tickets going on sale**

October 9, 2012

By John Lowe / Detroit Free Press

OAKLAND, Calif. -- No matter how long you have been a Detroit Tigers fan, this is a feeling you've never had.

The Tigers are going on the road in a postseason series with a two-game lead.

That has never happened in franchise history, going all the way back to the team's first postseason appearance, the 1907 World Series with the young Ty Cobb against the Chicago Cubs. (The Cubs beat the Tigers in that World Series and also in the next year's Series. To this day, those remain the only two times the Cubs have won the World Series.)

The Tigers have a 2-0 lead over the A's after they won the opening two games of the series at Comerica Park. The best-of-five series will now be resolved in Oakland.

Only once in the postseason have the Tigers ever gone on the road with any kind of a lead. In the 1940 World Series, they took a 3-2 lead to Cincinnati for the conclusion of the Series.

That World Series became more proof that "momentum is tomorrow's starting pitcher." The Tigers took the 3-2 lead by winning Game 5 in Detroit from the Reds, 8-0. So the Tigers had all the momentum, right?

In Games 6 and 7, the Tigers scored a combined one run. The Reds won both games to take their last world title until 1975. That's when they won the first of two in a row under manager Sparky Anderson.

Notes: If necessary, Game 4 of the Tigers-A's series would start at 9:37 p.m. and be aired by TNT. ... Tickets for potential Tigers ALCS home games will go on sale at 10 a.m. Tuesday. Call 866-66-TIGER or visit [tigers.com](http://tigers.com). ... And check out this new postseason TV commercial featuring the Tigers:



## Oakland's reaction to The Kiss is way over the top

October 9, 2012

By Jamie Samuelsen / Detroit Free Press

Did you have a problem with Detroit Tigers reliever Al Albuquerque's ball smooch in Game 2 on Sunday against the A's?

The Oakland A's are one of the great stories in baseball this year. Nobody can take away their stunning run to the AL West title. I honestly think that the only people rooting against them down the stretch were the Texas Rangers and any old-school scouts who hate GM Billy Beane and everything "Moneyball" represents.

But that goodwill is going away rather quickly. The A's really, really need to shut up.

They're quickly transforming into a whiny bunch of losers after spending most of the season playing like a scrappy bunch of overachievers. First, we had the hitters complaining about umpire Jim Reynolds' strike zone for Justin Verlander on Saturday night. It got so bad that Josh Reddick threw his helmet and bat after a strikeout Sunday against Doug Fister. If that were a regular-season game, Reddick likely would have been tossed.

Instead, cooler heads prevailed, and Reddick was allowed to stay in the game and deliver a go-ahead homer off Joaquin Benoit in the eighth inning.

And then, in the ninth inning, we had the most infamous baseball kiss since Morganna patrolled the fields of major league games. (For people under the age of 35, Morganna "The Kissing Bandit" was a well-endowed blonde who used to run onto the field and kiss random players. As I write this, I can't believe it used to be commonplace. Could you imagine if Morganna existed today? She'd be tackled by security before she even made it across the warning track. Morganna was celebrated and lauded for her exploits in the '70s and the '80s. Now she'd be arrested and prosecuted.)

Anyway, we've all seen the highlight 30 times by now. Tigers reliever Al Albuquerque grabs a comebacker to the mound off the bat of Oakland's Yoenis Cespedes, runs toward first base, kisses the ball and tosses it to Prince Fielder to end the inning. With runners on first and third, it was one of the biggest outs recorded by a Tiger all day, and it set the stage for Don Kelly's game-winning sacrifice fly in the ninth.

After the game, Reddick was at it again. After saying that Albuquerque was unprofessional and trying to show up the A's dugout, Reddick really lit him up.

"I don't think anybody, from one day of experience in the big leagues to 15 years in the big leagues, everybody knows that this is a professional game," Reddick said. "You have to keep within yourself. You can do all that stuff in the dugout, when nobody is looking, but you have to keep that stuff out of the game."

The kiss probably wasn't the greatest idea in the world. And in the heat of competition, an opponent might interpret something to be far worse than it actually was intended to be. But Albuquerque has no track record for a staged act. It was a huge out in a huge moment of the game. And when an All-Star-caliber player such as Cespedes grounds out with a runner in scoring position, it's totally within the player's right to celebrate.

Normally, we get the fist pump or the finger point. Normally, I'll admit, we don't get the kiss. And perhaps there was some ulterior motive in the pitcher's mind. But with no history of misbehaving, I pose this question: What's the big deal? It seemed like a moment of true exuberance and originality. Now if Albuquerque decides to make this his calling card, there might be an issue. But in the history of baseball, has a pitcher ever had a celebration move when fielding a comebacker? This was a onetime kiss heard 'round the world. It should have ended right there.

But, of course, Reddick had to make an issue out of it after the game. This sounds like the classic case of a player deflecting because his team is in a major hole. And this sounds like the classic case of a player deflecting because he has done very little to help. Other than his solo homer off Benoit, Reddick is 0-for-6 with six strikeouts. Instead of taking his rightful blame for the A's plight, Reddick unloads on the strike zone, the umpires and a harmless kiss. The A's are making it rather easy for the Tigers to take this series. But the Tigers have something to do with it, too. And Reddick would be wise to recognize this rather than whine about all the injustices being done. And if the issue is showing up the opponent, it sure looked like Coco Crisp was trying to pull off a basket catch in the seventh inning in what turned into a game-changing error. I didn't hear any Tigers complaining about that. Why complain when you're up, 2-0?

This doesn't erase what the A's have done. And it doesn't mean that the series is over. But so often in sports, we sit here and debate the slightest slip or the slightest slight. This was neither. This was an impulse move by a happy pitcher. True, it was odd. But that's all it was. And the A's best get over the kiss quickly, otherwise they'll be kissing 2012 good-bye.

## Tigers should finish off A's now, or else

October 9, 2012

By John Niyo / The Detroit News

End it now, before it gets messy.

OK, before it gets any messier. Because as giddy as the Tigers were to fly to Oakland with a 2-0 lead over the A's in the best-of-five American League Division Series, they should also understand — as well as anyone — how fleeting those fly-by-night feelings can be.

"We're feeling good about ourselves," said Doug Fister, the Game 2 starter who pitched well but didn't get the win Sunday at Comerica Park. "We've taken care of business here."

But they'll feel a lot better, he agreed, once they've taken care of the unfinished business: Kissing the A's goodbye — and yes, Al Alburquerque's silly smooch was still being debated Monday in Oakland — and advancing to the AL Championship Series.

So that's the challenge Tuesday night at Oakland Coliseum, where the Tigers will send Anibal Sanchez to the mound against a riled-up lineup that struck out 23 times in the first two games but insists it's going to go down swinging, just the same.

Can the Tigers end the drama now, without any more plot twists? Given their track record this season — sputtering their way to an AL Central title they were supposed to clinch in June — you have to wonder.

Sweep would help

But if you're wondering what Jim Leyland's message will be to his team before tonight's Game 3, don't bother. It'll be the same message he's been delivering all year, with one exception: If you're trying to get to first base with a baseball, throw it, don't kiss it. ("I'd have probably hugged it first," Leyland joked Monday).

"Everybody thinks you have to warn your team about being overconfident," Leyland said. "I don't think that at all. Our team is very mature. Just like the Oakland A's. We know we have to win one game. They know they have to win three. You don't have to go around and give speeches to people."

If he did, though, he might tell them about the last time he took a team out to the Bay Area with a 2-0 lead. It was 15 years ago, in 1997, when his Marlins, after a couple one-run wins at home, finished off a sweep of the Giants — their first step en route to a World Series title.

A sweep would be nice, obviously, allowing Leyland to set his rotation anyway he chooses for the ALCS against either New York or Baltimore. Even if it takes until Wednesday, he'd still have Justin Verlander ready for Game 1 against the Yankees or Orioles on Saturday.

But if it gets to Game 5, the next round might be the least of the Tigers' concerns.

In the here-and-there history of this quirky 2-3 format for baseball's divisional and championship series, teams taking a 2-0 lead have gone on to win 17 of 21 times, according to STATS LLC. That still leaves some precedent, though, most recently in 1995, when the Yankees lost three in a row in Seattle to lose the ALDS.

A similar collapse here doesn't seem likely, especially with Verlander's shadow looming as the Tigers' Game 5 stopper, if necessary. But it's not like the Tigers are blitzing the A's here, folks. Of the five runs they scored Sunday, none was batted in by an actual, you know, hit. They're 3-for-15 with runners in scoring position in the first two games. And while they've gotten two good starts from Verlander and Fister, it's certainly reasonable to think we'll see more of that questionable bullpen in Games 3 and 4, if it gets that far.

Will it, though?

"It's tough: They have to go home and win three," said Don Kelly, the surprising star of Game 2 who scored the tying run in the eighth and then drove in the winning run with a sacrifice fly in the ninth.

"But," Kelly quickly added, "they just beat Texas three in a row at home to win the division. So it's not gonna be a cakewalk."

Road woes

No, maybe not. Not when you consider the Tigers are one of only two playoff teams that had a losing record (38-43) on the road in the regular season. (St. Louis is the other). And not when you consider the A's — arguably the best team in baseball since June — were tied with the Tigers for the second-best home record (50-31) in the majors.

As Kelly pointed out, the A's have done this before — stunning the Rangers with a sweep to win the AL West last week. They're the first team in history to win a division after trailing by five or more games with less than 10 games to play. And as Oakland's Cliff Pennington said Sunday after the loss, "This team's done it all year, and I don't think there's any question we can do it again."

So it's best not to tempt fate. Better yet not to taunt it, though it might be too late to say that, at least if you believe the A's talk of angry baseball gods and Albuquerque's blasphemous cowhide kiss.

"We're playing one hell of a team," Leyland said. "They're not going to cash it in, trust me. Their manager's tough. Their players are tough. And we got a long, long way to go yet."

Not necessarily. They can end this right now, if they want. And they will, if they're smart.

## **Tigers Game 3 keys include Delmon Young finding his power**

October 9, 2012

By Lynn Henning / The Detroit News

### 1. Getting some crunch from No. 5 hitter Delmon Young

Young has hit one home run in the past 37 days. He has three doubles in the past five weeks. A team needs more from its No. 5 hitter — or he shouldn't be batting No. 5, especially when he has grounded into five double plays. The Tigers have been putting people on base ahead of Young. But the 26-year-old hitter, whose mission is to drive the baseball, has been doing precious little bashing. He has driven in 12 runs the past 35 days, which includes two games in which he had three RBIs. Young must get his bat cracking if the Tigers are to win their share of playoff games, which are bound to be close.

### 2. Neutralizing the A's home-field advantage

The Tigers love their home ballpark. They were 50-31 at Comerica Park during the regular season and stoked their hearth with two more playoff victories against the Athletics. Just so happens the Athletics had the same record at home as the Tigers, which means they're a percentage bet to win tonight, and maybe another one or two if the Tigers aren't careful. Last week, the Athletics laid the lumber on a Rangers team that figured it could travel to Oakland and take care of some essential business, which would have happened if the Rangers had won even one game. It didn't, and ended up losing the wild-card playoff. It's a lesson for the confident Tigers, who must win only one of three to grab a ticket to the American League Championship Series.

### 3. Avoiding bullpen breakdowns

Tigers manager Jim Leyland was stoic after Sunday's game, talking about the "confidence" he had in his bullpen. It was noble of him to back up setup man Joaquin Benoit, who had been tagged for a couple of eighth-inning runs that nearly proved fatal. But the Tigers' late-inning relievers, while generally reliable, have had their share of tumbles. Benoit has allowed 15 home runs in 73 innings. It's not a fatal statistic, not when his WHIP (walks plus hits per inning) is a relatively strong 1.14. But the combination of Benoit (ERA 3.68) and an often-mortal Jose Valverde (1.24 WHIP, 3.78 ERA) can make for an unpredictable finish against teams on the level of Oakland. Benoit is 35, Valverde 34. Is age entering the picture? The Tigers hope not.

### 4. Paying attention to baserunners

The Tigers can't allow Yoenis Cespedes to do what he did Sunday against Benoit. Cespedes stole second base easily. He stole third even more easily. The Tigers are probably better at holding baserunners than their critics allow, which is demonstrated every time Justin Verlander or Max Scherzer pitches. But they cannot for a moment become passive and watch the Athletics thief bases. Larceny is easier against right-handed pitchers, and while Verlander and Scherzer handle their responsibilities well, Anibal Sanchez will need to be on alert tonight. Athletics manager Bob Melvin and his team will be aggressive. Running more is bound to be part of the game plan.

## **Bench comes up big up for Tigers against A's**

October 9, 2012

By Lynn Henning / The Detroit News

On one side of the Tigers clubhouse Sunday, the Tigers appeared to be throwing an Appreciation Day for Don Kelly, their reclaimed teammate who helped Detroit win Game 2 of their Division Series playoff against the Oakland A's.

Across the carpeted clubhouse floor, tucked against his locker, another of those lower-profile Tigers was staring at an iPhone.

"Busy being a GM," said Danny Worth, the shortstop who specializes in wry smiles and fielding the brand of ground ball that might have saved Sunday's victory.

Worth was checking his NFL Fantasy League team. But he talked about Sunday's walk-off victory, even if Worth downplayed his ninth-inning jewel, which saw him go deep into the hole between third base and shortstop, backhand Coco Crisp's hot grounder, and whip a throw to second base for a force-out on A's runner Cliff Pennington.

"What gets lost in the shuffle of this game, I think, is the fact Danny Worth made a hell of a play and got the force at second," Tigers manager Jim Leyland said. "A tremendous play."

No more "tremendous," though, than the one-hop bullet rookie right-fielder Avisail Garcia fired at catcher Gerald Laird in the third inning that nailed Crisp following a single by Brandon Moss.

It was no more essential than the soaring fly ball Kelly sent to right-center field that scored Omar Infante with Sunday's walk-off run and victory.

Together, the craftsmanship from Kelly, Worth, and Garcia reminded Tigers followers why Leyland was happy to stick 14 position players on the Tigers' playoff roster, one more than was carried during the regular season. Playoff series require four rather than five starting pitchers. A manager can replace that 12th pitcher with an extra man whose value was on stage Sunday.

Leyland could pinch-run twice in the Tigers' eighth, when they scored a run to tie the Athletics, 4-4, setting up their ninth-inning rally capped by Kelly's sacrifice fly.

He could afford to pinch-hit twice in that inning without emptying his bench (Ramon Santiago remained on guard).

On a team on which defense and speed can be boosted mightily by Leyland's dugout options, the Tigers have bulked up with a veritable National Guard unit.

Garcia, who was playing in the minors six weeks ago, brings speed, defense, and an impressive right-handed bat that Leyland has deployed against right-handed starters and in late-inning defensive situations.

Kelly, who spent the latter part of summer at Triple A Toledo, has regular-season and playoff experience, as well as speed and the skills to play at least eight positions.

Worth, 27, can play shortstop, second base, or third base, and with finesse, as he did in snagging Crisp's grounder Sunday, a play regular shortstop Jhonny Peralta likely could not have matched.

Leyland has another insurance policy in backup infielder Santiago. His bat has been hollow in 2012, and Santiago's prospects for 2013 (he is signed through next season) are not good. But he offers Leyland sure-handed defense at second base or shortstop, or, if the need arises, at third.

Another reserve could easily make a difference in an extra-inning game if the Tigers confront one during these playoffs.

Bryan Holaday, a rookie catcher, is regarded as a fine defender and a respectable right-handed hitter.

Leyland's special forces have been so handy he might be tempted to use them more frequently. Peralta has limited range and has not hit with punch during the season's second half. Is it possible Worth might be unleashed in more games, and earlier, than has been the case for a player who spent much of 2012 at Toledo?

Garcia, although only 21, has handled big league pitching with more authority and grace than had been foreseen. Privately, Leyland might wonder if Garcia would have been a better bet against right-hander Ryan Cook on Sunday than the man who pinch-hit for him, Quintin Berry.

A skipper who values everyday contributions, as well as the savvy a veteran tends to provide, didn't change his Game 2 lineup heading into tonight's Game 3 against the A's at Oakland Coliseum.

But he does have options. He used them Sunday. And the Tigers, for now pleased to have that extra position body available, are realizing an early dividend.

## Ex-Tiger Brandon Inge defends Al Alburquerque's intention

October 9, 2012

By Tom Gage / The Detroit News

Oakland, Calif — Brandon Inge knows Al Alburquerque. He was his teammate last year.

So he knows the personality behind Alburquerque's kissing-the-ball incident from Game 2. But if it motivates his Oakland teammates to get angry about the kiss, Inge isn't going to tell them not to.

"He honestly really doesn't know better," Inge said of Alburquerque. "He doesn't mean anything by it."

Inge wasn't surprised it was Alburquerque who did it, though.

"I don't mean it in bad way or good way or anything," he said. "He's a unique individual. He meant nothing by it, I'm sure, but still, you don't do those things."

"You're up two games, don't give the other team an edge at all. You just don't do it

One more

"I wouldn't kiss a ball," Oakland reliever Grant Balfour said. "That's me personally. I don't know, maybe he's got a baseball fetish."

Home advantage?

The Tigers haven't often played at the Oakland Coliseum when it's been full, or close to it. What's it like, Bob Melvin?

"I think it really helped us that last weekend of the season," the A's manager said. "The crowd was really involved. But even earlier in the season, if there are 10,000-15,000 in here, it sounds like it's 30."

"When this place is packed, it's about as loud as it gets. So it has an effect on us. We appreciate it."

Around the horn

The A's set an American League team record for strikeouts during the regular season and struck out 23 times in the first two games of the Division Series.

"You know, we tend to strike out a little," said Melvin, "and we did the first couple of games. It didn't stand out to me. Every team is going to have deficiencies in a certain area. That's probably not our most prideful stat."

"Against a guy like Justin Verlander, you're going to strike out some. And ( Doug ) Fister was good, too. So we've had a few of them."

"But it's not like the last day you're going to say, 'Today let's work on cutting our swings down and choke up two inches on two strikes.' We're going to play the way that got us here."

... How does Game 3 starter Brett Anderson view the predicament the A's are in?

"We're down 0-2. We won three games in a row against the Rangers. I don't see why we can't do it again."

... Of Tigers Game 3 starter Anibal Sanchez, whom he knows from his days managing in the National League, Melvin said. "I don't see anything different in his repertoire. He has some pitches you have to deal with. It's not like he's a two-pitch guy."

... And should there be a Game 4, it will be Max Scherzer for the Tigers and right-hander A.J. Griffin for Oakland.



## Intangibles also support Tigers' Miguel Cabrera in MVP push

October 9, 2012

By Kurt Mensching / The Detroit News

In 1967, Carl Yastrzemski hit for the Triple Crown, a fact that has been brought up again and again as Miguel Cabrera earned one of his own.

Less heralded recently but equally important, baseball executive Branch Rickey was elected to Baseball's Hall of Fame that same year.

Rickey might be known for many things, most notable among them breaking the color barrier when he signed Jackie Robinson to a contract.

You can thank him, too, for creating the modern minor league farm system.

What you probably don't realize, however, is that Rickey used many of the statistics we loosely call sabermetrics today.

Don't like on-base percentage? Don't blame Bill James or Billy Beane or "Moneyball" or whatever else. Blame Rickey, who in Life magazine wrote:

"Baseball people generally are allergic to new ideas. We are slow to change. For 51 years I have judged baseball by personal observation, by considered opinion and by accepted statistical methods. But recently I have come upon a device for measuring baseball which has compelled me to put different values on some of my oldest and most cherished theories. It reveals some new and startling truths about the nature of the game."

Rickey penned that in 1954, in an article that introduced on-base percentage, isolated power and more to an audience that was probably even more shocked by it than today's. He also noted that batting average is only a partial means of measuring a player's effectiveness on offense, called RBIs misleading and said strikeouts were overrated.

Trout numbers impressive

Fifty-eight years later, on-base percentage is more widely known than ever, yet RBIs remain every bit an important part of the discussion.

Rickey would probably like a player like Cabrera, he of the .393 on-base percentage and .277 isolated power in 2012, of the .448 OBP in 2011 and .420 OBP in 2010.

He'd like Angels outfielder Mike Trout, too, a player who hit for average and power, took walks and stole bases. Trout got on base at a .399 clip in 2012, had a .238 ISO, hit 30 home runs, and stole 49 bases in 139 games.

That's pretty impressive.

Commonsense might tell you Trout's multifaceted game has a high value.

That stat you've surely heard enough about — Wins Above Replacement — would agree. Different versions of WAR exist — all based on the same basic ideas of measuring everything a player does inside the lines of the game. All say that Cabrera might have been the better hitter, but Trout was worth more runs to the Angels than Cabrera to the Tigers.

Statistics like that can give you the information you need to make informed decisions in a business that gives out multimillion-dollar contracts. They can help you find a player who might be overlooked by other teams, and whose luck might be about to expire.

They can help you compare players from different teams, leagues and eras. They can lead to interesting debates, conversations and vitriol.

"Statistics, of course, cannot tell the whole story," Rickey wrote. "They fall short of bridging the gap between human expectancy and fulfillment. They cannot measure such intangibles as intelligence, courage, disposition, effort."

Statistics not everything

In other words, it's still a game played by human beings, and you can't measure what happens in the moment the batter and pitcher stare each other down.

Maybe you can't measure the intangibles. Rickey posited those balance out over the course of a season and ultimately show up in the stats.

But maybe, without the intangibles, without the quirks, without outliers, baseball would lack some of the magical moments that connect generations to the game.

Triple Crown stats are no more a threat to sabermetrics than these "new" stats are to the traditional ones. Both can have a spot at the table.

Sometimes, though, you ask questions that statistics alone cannot answer. "What makes a player an MVP?" is one of them.

Cabrera — a man who has overcome personal struggles, who is his team's nominee for the Clemente award because he "best exemplifies the game of baseball, sportsmanship, community involvement, and the individual's contribution to his team" — rallied the Tigers from a three-game deficit in the Central Division in September while coming from behind to win the Triple Crown.

That was a magical, historical season, one that fans will recall for years to come.

Reasonable people can disagree, but for those reasons Cabrera should be your MVP.

## Tigers announcer Jim Price stays tough despite cancer fight

October 9, 2012

By Rod Beard / The Detroit News

Detroit —For many baseball fans, the voice of Tigers radio color analyst Jim Price is as recognizable as a close friend's. Many fans feel as if they know him; his commentary is as omnipresent in the summer and fall as normal dinner conversation. But almost knowing him isn't close to truly knowing him or what he has gone through the past few years — and what he's still battling. Price, 71, is in his 20th season as a Tigers broadcaster and his voice is as strong as ever — even in the midst of his second bout with cancer.

"I lost my kidney over two years ago to cancer. Last January, they took out both my adrenal glands with cancer," Price said. "My body has absorbed a lot of stuff and I lost about 40 pounds but I feel great."

Price, a catcher with the Tigers from 1967-71, has teamed with play-by-play man Dan Dickerson on radio broadcasts since 2003. Before that he worked four years with the legendary Ernie Harwell and another with Frank Beckmann. Prior to that, he worked for four years on the PASS-TV cable broadcast.

But this season has been one of the most taxing for Price, as he missed a nine-game West Coast trip because of health concerns.

"I admire how he's persevered. He wants to be on the road and he wants to be with the team. He missed that one trip and I think it almost killed him," Dickerson said. "It was the right thing to do and after he missed that, he realized it was the right thing to do and he's been fine since."

Tigers owner Mike Ilitch has told Price he can take as much time off as he needs as he continues his battle, but Price has soldiered through the season.

"To have Mr. Ilitch tell me that I could take as much time as I want and never worry about anything, that's pretty cool. I told Mr. Ilitch the next off-day is after the World Series," Price said. "I'm very lucky to sit here and represent everybody and the ownership is just spectacular. The Ilitch family is very loyal and they don't know any other way."

With the regular season over and the playoffs in full swing, Price isn't showing any signs of getting ready to call it a career.

"I hope I continue to do this for another 10 years. I feel great," he said.

"What's funny about this is my old injuries don't hurt as much (my ankle and my knees don't hurt as much). But I'm very lucky to have great doctors and the ownership and this organization have been wonderful to me. The loyalty means a lot to me."

The art of battling

The baseball season of 162 games — plus spring training — is a grind for the players because of the tight schedule and sporadic days off. For the broadcasters, it's pretty much the same, without the same physical toll.

"I just admire what Jim has done because it's not easy. He's going on and off the chemo — it's not like other chemo because it's oral chemo — but it takes something out of him and the food doesn't taste good," Dickerson said. "He gets dry mouth and if you're an announcer and you're trying to speak and it's a real problem. He has mints that he's sucking on, so it's not easy."

Price's analysis is unique, replete with his trademark phrases such as "nice area" when referring to cities and their fans, or "the art of pitching" in describing pitchers' expertise at getting hitters out, or the newly minted "yellow hammer" that describes nasty curveballs. All are familiar to Tigers fans, who have reached out to Price during his tough time.

"It's unbelievable. I wish I could meet all of (the fans). They're the greatest folks in the world," Price said. "I meet fantasy campers and run into people on the road and they say, 'I'm from Flint — is that a nice area?' All those things are touching my heart."

Through his battles, Price doesn't make a distinction between himself and anyone else and says he's blessed by the opportunity to stay in baseball.

"So many people have a lot of problems and I'm just one of many. I have friends who are fighting diseases, so a lot of us are in the same boat and I'm one of them," he said. "Miguel Cabrera hugs me every night and Doug Fister, even the days he pitches, asks how I feel. For them to have that concern means a lot to me. My good

friend Al Kaline is always concerned. Being around the team, I feel wonderful. On an off-day, I want to be at the ballpark and be with the guys."

One of the gang

As a former player on the 1968 World Series champion team, Price has instant credibility with the current Tigers and has built relationships with some of them.

"It's special to be able to sit here and talk about an outing or a hitter or something that's going on in the baseball world. He's using his knowledge of his old playing days and trying to help us with it," pitcher Doug Fister said.

"We're checking in on him and he's always checking in on us to see how we're doing physically and mentally."

The players are aware of Price's fight and are confident that his spirit and fortitude will carry him through.

"I think you see a lot of athletes beat stuff with regularity because it has to do with that fire, that natural competitiveness that we all have," pitcher Justin Verlander said. "As athletes at the top of their profession, our competitiveness is off the charts; any challenge you put in front of us, we're going to take head on."

Catchers are known for their toughness because of the everyday beating they take behind the plate. That bond solidifies the relationship between Price and current catcher Alex Avila.

"He's tells me every day that I'm the best-looking and smartest guy on the team — but that just has to do with me being a catcher," Avila joked. "He's definitely a great guy to have around with the positive energy and just his overall demeanor. He's a good person."

Manager Jim Leyland, another former catcher, says that being around the team has kept Price's spirits up and in a regular routine so that he could have an escape from the battle with cancer.

"His spirits have been good and he's shown the toughness, which probably has something to do with his athletic career. I think we've been good therapy for him to be around the guys," Leyland said. "I think that lifts his spirits and it would be frustrating for him not to be around us and that's really helped him."

Avila said Price's battle with cancer shows his grit and his will to fight through tough times.

"He's used to the grind of life. It's very similar to the grind of a season. It's a mind-set you put yourself to every day even though it's going to be tough and difficult physically, you still have a job to do," he said. "He's always had that mentality and portrayed that it's something only catchers have. He's an incredible man — that's for sure."

## Tigers want to keep - rather than rent - pitcher Anibal Sanchez

October 9, 2012

By Tom Gage / The Detroit News

Oakland, Calif. — Not so fast.

Anibal Sanchez might not be a rented pitcher, after all. The Tigers are interested in keeping him.

Very interested, in fact.

To the extent that Dave Dombrowski, the team's president and general manager — who normally says little about any player's future — said without hesitation, "Yeah, he's a player we'd like to keep."

Once Sanchez settled in, after a few rocky starts, his value to the Tigers skyrocketed. He probably would have been slated to start the fourth game of the American League Division Series if Max Scherzer wasn't coming off a couple of physical problems (right shoulder, right ankle).

But because it's not been smooth sailing for Scherzer recently, the switch to Sanchez for Game 3 on Tuesday night feels seamless to the Tigers.

With several good, some of them outstanding starts as a Tiger, Sanchez no longer has the look of a pitcher stopping by for a few months before signing as a free agent elsewhere.

In his last eight starts of the regular season, Sanchez went 3-3 with a 2.15 ERA. Only twice in those eight did he allow more than two earned runs.

That's the consistency the Tigers were seeking.

When the deal was made with Miami that brought Sanchez to the Tigers in July, however, it was widely speculated he'd be gone at the end of the season because he already makes \$8 million a year.

But the price tag for good players doesn't appear to be a deterrent for owner Mike Ilitch after any season — let alone one that still has a chance of being special for the Tigers.

The Tigers like what the 28-year-old right-hander has done for them. That said, they still acknowledge the risk they took in parting with a package of prospects featuring right-handed pitcher Jacob Turner.

Of Sanchez, Dombrowski added, "We know we gave up a lot of talent in that deal, but for us he's been very big. We have interest in him beyond now, sure.

"We haven't discussed that, but we like him a lot. Is it a good fit? We hope so."

Sanchez, though, isn't letting his future free agency become a distraction.

"I don't want to be ahead on anything," he said. "I'm a person that thinks day-by-day.

"(Free agency) I know is coming, but that's my agent's job. That's why I have an agent. Right now I focus on tomorrow. I don't think too much what's going to happen after that."

Although not certain of his own return, manager Jim Leyland would like to see Sanchez remain a Tiger.

For one thing, Leyland doesn't see a pitcher who's going all out simply because it's his free agent year. He sees a competitor in Sanchez.

"I'm sure he's aware of his situation," Leyland said, "but I think he's just trying to win games.

"He likes it here and I think he's tried to make a good impression on us. Is he aware of what's going on? Yes, but he's not the type of guy who says, 'I'm going to go out and pitch good because I'm a free agent and I want to make a lot of money.'

"I assume there will be some competition for him. That's the way the system works."

The Tigers are well aware of how it works. And they also know the base salary (\$8 million in 2012) from which Sanchez's next contract will increase.

But there's no sign of flinching at the cost. On the other hand, Sanchez can't shortchange himself.

"You're pretty naïve and gullible if you don't think they know what's going on," Leyland said. "But again, he's not saying, 'There's a pot of gold out there, I have to do well.'

"He's saying he wants to win. He likes it here; he's gotten comfortable here and I'm real happy about it. I like him a lot.

"But I don't know how it will play out."

At this early stage, nobody can know

But don't be surprised if Sanchez decides to stay — because this much is already known: The Tigers have decided they'd like that.

## **Tigers' Max Scherzer tosses pain-free session, says he's '100 percent' for potential Game 4**

October 9, 2012

By James Schmehl / MLive.com

OAKLAND, Calif. -- There's a chance it won't even be played. But should the American League Division Series be extended to Game 4, Detroit Tigers right-hander Max Scherzer will be ready.

Scherzer threw a second bullpen session Monday in Oakland and put to rest any doubts that he might not be ready Wednesday if the series isn't wrapped up tonight.

"I'm 100 percent," he said. "No question about it."

Scherzer missed his next-to-last start of the regular season because of soreness in the deltoid area of his right shoulder. He then twisted his right ankle last Monday in Kansas City during the Tigers' on-field celebration, putting his final start in question.

"The ankle is 100 percent, just like it was three days ago," he said. "And, the arm is feeling great, just like it was three days ago."

In an effort to prevent additional damage, manager Jim Leyland opted to give Scherzer the extra day of rest and pitch Anibal Sanchez in Game 3 and slot Scherzer for Game 4.

"We decided that that would be the best way to go," Leyland said. "By pitching Sanchez in front of Scherzer, (it) would keep Sanchez from keeping off too long, too."

Scherzer was initially scratched from the team's regular-season finale, but he wound up throwing four scoreless innings of three-hit ball against the Royals, striking out three.

There was question as to whether he'd be under a specific pitch count for Game 4 after throwing only 75 pitches in his last start. The answer, he emphatically said, is no.

"It's strong," Scherzer said about his right shoulder. "I've taken care of it and I'm back to being 100 percent.

That was evident when I when out there last week."

Still, Scherzer hasn't eclipsed the 100-pitch mark since Sept. 12, being limited to 44, 86 and 75 pitches in his last three starts, respectively. Arm strength could be a concern, which is why a second "light" bullpen session Monday was likely necessary.

"I love being in this opportunity and I love having the ball in this situation," he said. "If I need to take the ball in Game 4, hopefully I can go out there and give the team a chance to win."

In the event Scherzer is quick to exit, the Tigers have two long relief options, including Rick Porcello, who has shifted from the starting rotation to the bullpen for the ALDS.

## **Detroit Tigers to use same lineup as Game 2; A's name Brett Anderson starter for Game 3**

October 9, 2012

By James Schmehl / MLive.com

OAKLAND, Calif. -- The Detroit Tigers finally know who they'll face on the mound in Game 3.

And, it's who they expected all along.

The A's made a not-so-surprising announcement Monday, officially naming left-hander Brett Anderson their starter for Game 3 of the ALDS on Tuesday night.

It became increasingly apparent as the week progressed that Anderson, who is nursing a strained right oblique, would be ready to return in time for Game 3.

Following Monday's workout, he declared himself good to go.

"It wasn't ideal getting hurt again, but I feel good," he said. "And, the postseason, who knows when we're going to get back here."

Anderson, who missed most the season recovering from Tommy John Surgery, was initially activated Aug. 21 and went 4-2 with a 2.57 ERA in six starts before injuring his oblique.

Tuesday's start, which will start at 9:07 p.m. and be televised on TBS, would be his first since straining the muscle Sept. 19. As it stands, he's not expected to be on a specific pitch count.

"We'll play it by ear," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "I don't think we're going to do anything too strict as far as his pitch counts go. We're just going to see every inning how he feels and monitor that."

With another left-hander on the mound, Tigers manger Jim Leyland confirmed Monday that he'd stick with the same lineup for Game 3 that he used in Game 2. As a result, Gerald Laird will get the nod behind the plate, and Avisail Garcia will start in right field.

Here's the lineup Detroit used in Game 2:

1. Austin Jackson, CF
2. Omar Infante, 2B
3. Miguel Cabrera, 3B
4. Prince Fielder, 1B
5. Delmon Young, DH
6. Jhonny Peralta, SS
7. Andy Dirks, LF
8. Avisail Garcia, RF
9. Gerald Laird, C

Oakland left-hander Tommy Milone tossed six innings of one-run ball in Sunday's loss, giving up five hits and striking out six, with Delmon Young driving in the Tigers' lone run on a dribbler down the first-base line.

The A's also announced right-hander A.J. Griffin will take the mound in the event Game 4 is needed. That game time has been announced for 9:37 p.m. and will air live on TNT, should it be necessary.

Griffin is 7-1 with a 3.06 ERA in 15 starts after being called up from Oakland's Triple-A affiliate June 24. His .875 winning percentage is tops in Oakland history.

"This series is kind of like a microcosm of our season," Anderson said. "You've got two rookies and a guy that's been hurt 90 percent of the season. But this team has handled adversity better than any team I've seen, so you wouldn't expect anything less."

## **Silliness grows to fever pitch in aftermath of Al Alburquerque's kiss in Game 2 of ALDS**

October 9, 2012

By Chris Iott / MLive.com

OAKLAND, Calif. -- The regular season is over for the Detroit Tigers. They are in the postseason. The offseason is -- they hope -- a ways off.

But on Monday, an off-day in the American League Division Series between the Tigers and the Oakland A's, well, it was silly season.

The Tigers arrived in Oakland to prepare for Game 3 of their American League Division Series against the A's only to deal with the aftermath of the kiss that Al Alburquerque gave the baseball Sunday before throwing out A's outfielder Yoenis Cespedes in the ninth inning of a 5-4 victory for the Tigers.

It was the only out Alburquerque recorded and the only batter he faced. But with the A's threatening to score in a 4-4 game, it was huge. The incident -- as all incidents do during playoff time -- got blown out of proportion. Of course, the A's and their fans were offended. They felt as if Alburquerque had shown them up. Of course, the Tigers and their fans don't think it's a big deal. Alburquerque is their teammate and player.

"I can assure everybody, including the Oakland A's, that Alburquerque did nothing intentionally to offend the Oakland A's."

If the roles had been reversed Sunday, well, the roles would have been reversed Monday. If an A's reliever had done the same thing in the late innings of a game in which his team took a two-games-to-none lead over the Tigers, A's fans would be shrugging their shoulders. Tigers fans would be irate. This is how it works in sports. Tigers manager Jim Leyland dealt with the issue head on, repeating ad nauseam during an off-day press conference Monday that Alburquerque did not mean any disrespect with the gesture.

"I don't think it was the right thing to do," Leyland said. "I will sit here today and I will not try to defend it. I will say that I can assure everybody, including the Oakland A's, that Alburquerque did nothing intentionally to offend the Oakland A's. He did it, but it was not an intent in any way to offend the Oakland A's. I can assure you of that."

Some of Alburquerque's teammates took issue to the extra attention media members gave to Alburquerque in the visitors' clubhouse at the Oakland Coliseum.

"It's over," relief pitcher Octavio Dotel shouted from across the clubhouse as media members closed in on Alburquerque. "It's over. Keep kissing the ball. (Expletive) them."

Alburquerque spoke quietly and said the same thing that he said Sunday after the game, that he meant nothing by it, that it was simply a sign of his excitement about the game and about getting a key out. He apologized to anyone who might have been offended.

Alburquerque has a unique personality. Catcher Alex Avila said of Alburquerque: "He is in his own little world." Sports Illustrated's Mike Rosenberg summed it up this way:

"The Oakland A's are mad at Tigers reliever Al Alburquerque, which is like being mad at a motorized toy car that keeps going in circles. Alburquerque is such an odd duck that the other ducks screen their calls so they don't have to talk to him."

"I know they might have taken it as a sign of disrespect," catcher Gerald Laird said, "but if they knew the type of player he was and the type of guy he was, they wouldn't have taken it that way."

Former Tigers infielder Brandon Inge, now with the A's, spoke about the incident.

"I know him," Inge said. "I know he's unique and meant nothing. But I'm not going to tell my guys. I want them to stew."

That's pretty funny, but even the notion that the A's will somehow use the incident as a motivating factor is absolutely silly.

Really, do the A's now somehow care more about winning than they did before? Were they disinterested in playing a playoff series only to be jerked out of their slumber by a perceived slight by an opposing relief pitcher? Based on the 23 strikeouts they had in the first two games, it doesn't seem that getting angry and swinging harder is the adjustment they should make.

Monday was one of those off-days in a postseason series that made you wish there weren't any. Really, at this point, Game 3 cannot start soon enough.



Phil Coke seemed to say the same thing.

"There's nothing to talk about," Coke said. "It's over with. It's done. We've got a game tomorrow. That's what's on everyone's mind right now is tomorrow, not what happened yesterday."

There you have it. Phil Coke, voice of reason.

Let's all move on to Game 3. Really. As soon as we can.

## Oakland A's work to regroup after bobbling first two ALDS games vs. Detroit Tigers

October 9, 2012

By David Mayo / MLive.com

DETROIT -- Coco Crisp took every question and answered them all after his Oakland Athletics found themselves two games down to the Detroit Tigers in the best-of-five American League Division Series. The outfielder kept coming back to the same central theme.

"We've got to bounce back, kind of forget about it," Crisp said. "It's tough. It's going to be tough to forget about it. But we've got to come back this next game, clean slate, and try to do better."

A's manager Bob Melvin echoed Crisp because, after all, what else is there to say?

"You just got to move on," Melvin said. "If you let it stick in your craw then you won't be prepared to play to the best of your capabilities on Tuesday. So you've just got to let it go."

Don Kelly, one of the Tigers' unlikely Game 2 heroes when he scored the tying run as an eighth-inning pinch-runner, then drove in the game-winner in a 5-4 finish with a sacrifice fly in the ninth on Sunday, noted that the A's face a familiar uphill challenge.

"It's tough," Kelly said. "They have to go home and win three. But they just beat Texas three in a row at home to win their division. So it's not like it's going to be a cakewalk out there. We just have to continue to play our game. It's not going to be easy. But it's better to have to get one out there than two."

"I'm going to think of it. I don't know when it's going to happen but to replay things in your head, good or bad, it's inevitable." -- Coco Crisp

Crisp was at the center of two of the game's biggest plays. He was gunned down at the plate by right-fielder Avisail Garcia trying to score from second base on Brandon Moss's third-inning single.

Crisp also committed a game-turning, two-out, two-run error when he bobbed and dropped an attempted basket catch of Miguel Cabrera's short fly to center.

"I was playing pretty deep. I got a good read off the bat," Crisp said. "It's one of those judgment calls to try to catch it like that or try to slide into it. It's just unfortunate that I didn't make the catch. I feel like I should have made the catch, obviously. I think everybody would feel that way."

That bobble served as a key moment in a flurry of late scoring in Game 2, and in the series.

"Obviously, I'm going to think of it," Crisp said. "I don't know when it's going to happen but to replay things in your head, good or bad, it's inevitable."

The key, Melvin said, is to look forward after two games when untimely fielding blunders, 23 strikeouts and frustration over the strike zone, and a failed effort to use closer Grant Balfour in a tie situation Sunday all worked against the A's.

"We just need to win a game," Melvin said. "We need to go home and concentrate on Tuesday. If you start thinking about three games ahead, then you lose your focus on Tuesday's game."

## **Poll: Could Al Alburquerque's kissing stunt backfire on Tigers and inspire A's**

October 9, 2012

By Brendan Savage / MLive.com

Prince Fielder thought it was "the coolest thing" he had ever seen.

A lot of Detroit Tigers fans think it's no big deal, according to the comments on our MLive.com story.

Some national baseball analysts, however, don't feel the same way.

They think Detroit pitcher Al Alburquerque acted foolishly when he kissed the baseball Sunday before throwing to first base to get the final out in the top of the ninth inning of the Detroit Tigers' 5-4 victory in Game 2 of their American League Division Series with the Oakland A's.

And they wonder if the stunt could backfire and perhaps inspire the A's to rally from a 2-0 deficit when the series resumes Tuesday in Oakland.

The A's weren't amused and neither were some of the Major League Baseball Network analysts.

"There are certain things you do and don't do," said former big-league pitcher Mitch Williams, now a studio analyst for MLB Network. "That's a don't do. Al Alburquerque, I'm sure, will learn that.

"I'm sure somebody like (Miguel Cabrera) will go over and tell him 'That's not something we do.'"

How come?

Well, MLB analyst Ron Gant said it could inspire the A's by giving them something to rally around as they enter Game 3 on the brink of elimination.

Gant, who played 16 MLB seasons for eight teams, saw a similar move backfire once before.

"As an opposing player, you don't like that too much," Gant said. "I know he got caught up in the emotion there and got a huge out. That was a huge situation. But any chance you get to give that other team some spark, you should stay away from that.

"To me, I just don't like it when those emotions get away and you give the other team a spark. That happened to me back in (1996) with the Cardinals. Dennis Eckersley struck out one of the Braves players in (Game 4 of) the NLCS. We went up three games to one.

'That could turn out to be the kiss of death.' -- Omar Vizquel, MLB Network analyst.

"When he did that, he gave the old fist to the Braves dugout. Chipper Jones called a team meeting and said, 'That's not going to happen to us.' They came back and beat us in that series."

That they did, advancing to the World Series with a 15-0 rout in Game 7.

The A's certainly weren't amused at Alburquerque's antics.

"Whether he was trying to show us up or he was just pumped up from getting the out ... it was still very unprofessional," Oakland outfielder Josh Reddick told MLB Network. "That stuff should be kept in the dugout and not when you're running to first base to get a guy out."

Omar Vizquel, the oldest player in the Majors last season at age 45, chuckled when talking about it alongside Gant on the MLB Network postgame set.

But he also predicted it might indeed backfire on the Tigers.

"I think he got caught up in the emotion," said Vizquel, who spent last season with Toronto. "He's a young kid. He was happy he got Cespedes out but that could turn out to be the kiss of death."

Could it?

You tell us. Vote in our poll and don't be afraid to back up your answer with a comment.

## **Tickets for potential AL Championship Series games at Comerica Park go on sale Tuesday**

October 9, 2012

By Chris Iott / MLive.com

DETROIT -- Individual tickets for potential American League Championship Series home games at Comerica Park will go on sale at 10 a.m. Tuesday.

Tickets are available only by calling 866-66-TIGER or at [www.tigers.com](http://www.tigers.com). Customers will be limited to six tickets per game. Tickets will not be available at the Comerica Park box office.

The Tigers hold a 2-0 lead over the Oakland A's in their best-of-five American League Division Series after their 5-4 win Sunday over the A's.

If the Tigers advance and play the New York Yankees, they would open the ALCS on the road Saturday and return home for Game 3 on Oct. 16, followed by Game 4 and Game 5 the following two days.

If the Tigers advance and play the Baltimore Orioles, they would hold home-field advantage since the Orioles are a wild-card team. If that were the case, the Tigers would host Game 1 and Game 2 on Saturday and Sunday with Game 6 and Game 7 scheduled for Oct. 20-21.

## **Grading the Tigers: Joaquin Benoit spoils terrific start from Doug Fister in Game 2 of ALDS**

October 9, 2012

By James Schmehl / MLive.com

DETROIT -- A look at how the pitching and offense fared in the Detroit Tigers' 5-4 win over the Oakland Athletics in Game 2 of the American League Division Series:

### **STARTING PITCHING: A**

Doug Fister's pitchers' duel with Tommy Milone was lost in a sea of chaos Sunday afternoon, which is a darn shame. Why? Because Fister went above and beyond expectations in Game 2, limiting the A's to two runs on six hits in seven innings. Neither he nor Milone picked up Sunday's win -- but both had earned one.

Fister had movement on everything, using a sweeping breaking ball and a late-moving two-seamer to fan eight batters and keep Oakland's offense off balance for most the game.

A day after Oakland grumbled with the plate umpire in Game 1, the frustrations returned Sunday as plate umpire Mark Wegner fell victim to more lip service from A's players.

Stephen Drew voiced his displeasure after Fister struck him out looking in the third, and Josh Reddick, who has struck out six times in seven at-bats this series, was visibly frustrated after he struck out for the final out in the third.

### **RELIEF PITCHING: C-**

There was question as to whether Fister, who exited with 107 pitches under his belt, could've chewed up another inning, but manager Jim Leyland wanted his late-inning relievers to protect Detroit's 3-2 lead.

They didn't do a very good job.

Leyland handed the ball to Joaquin Benoit, who was in charge of protecting a slim lead after the A's committed a pivotal two-run error the previous inning. But, he blew it.

A run-scoring wild pitch from Benoit tied the game in the eighth, and the A's reclaimed the lead when Reddick followed with a solo homer to put the A's ahead, 4-3.

Cliff Pennington nearly came through for Oakland in the ninth, but his deep drive down the left-field line off left-hander Phil Coke went just foul.

Coke has been terrible against right-handed hitters this season, and eyebrows were raised when Leyland let him pitch to both Pennington and Coco Crisp. That said, Leyland was likely playing the splits (Pennington and Crisp hit .168 and .248, respectively, against southpaws this season).

Pennington eventually drew a walk, but was forced out at second on Crisp's sharp grounder to short. After Coke gave up a single to left-hander Stephen Drew, he was relieved by Al Albuquerque, who induced an inning-ending groundout. Too close for comfort.

### **OFFENSE: C**

The Tigers can't score runs. And, the ones they do score, they have Oakland mostly to thank due to costly errors the club has committed. Case in point? Crisp's failed basket catch that he dropped in the seventh, allowing two critical runs to score.

Of the eight combined runs Detroit has scored in Games 1 and 2, only one run has been driven in by a hit. That hit? It was Alex Avila's solo homer in Game 1.

For a second straight day, the Tigers struggled to piece together a string of hits and drive in much-needed runs. On Sunday, they left 10 runners on base and, at one point, Milone had retired 10 batters in a row. Missed opportunities.

The offensive woes could continue in Game 3 as left-hander Brett Anderson is expected to start -- and, by now, it's no secret that the Tigers have trouble against southpaws.

### **DEFENSE: A-**

The Tigers turned a double play, Avisail Garcia gunned a runner down at the plate from right field and Danny Worth possibly saved the game, recording a forceout to keep the game-tying run at first. A leaps-and-bounds improvement from Game 1.

It should also be noted that the Tigers have now gone four straight games -- including their last two regular-season games -- without committing an error.

## **Anibal excited for 'chance of a lifetime' Game 3 start**

### **Sanchez 'blessed' to be in postseason after trade from Miami**

October 9, 2012

By Barry Bloom / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Considering that on July 22, Anibal Sanchez was still playing for the Marlins, he knows he's a lucky man.

The right-hander is slated to take the mound for Detroit against Oakland in Game 3 of their American League Division Series on Tuesday at 9:07 p.m. ET at the O.co Coliseum in a game broadcast by TBS.

Not only is Sanchez making his first postseason appearance after playing six-plus seasons for the Marlins, he'll have the luxury of his club leading, 2-0, in the best-of-five series.

The Tigers could wrap it up on Tuesday evening. Left-hander Brett Anderson, returning from an oblique injury, will try and stave off elimination for the A's.

"I feel good," Sanchez said after the Tigers came from behind to defeat the A's, 5-4, on Sunday in Game 2 at Comerica Park. "I know that it's playoff time. I've never been in that situation, and I feel great. I think it's better now, because we're ahead. There's not too much pressure at all. We just have to play. Play relaxed. Have fun."

A's vs. Tigers

The Marlins were struggling through a lackluster and disappointing season, their first in a new ballpark near downtown Miami, when executives began breaking up the club.

Sanchez was surprised, but happy, when he was traded to Detroit along with infielder Omar Infante on July 23 for three Minor Leaguers. Sanchez felt he was given a new lease on life, playing for a team that was struggling under its own high expectations to repeat as American League Central champs.

"Beginning when I came here, I felt like it was really weird," Sanchez said during a media conference on Monday. "It was like my first time out of Miami, because it's my hometown."

Placed in the rotation, Sanchez made 12 starts, logging a 4-6 record and a 3.74 ERA, numbers that roughly matched his 19 starts with Miami. For the season, he finished 9-13 with a 3.94 ERA, and the Tigers caught the White Sox in first place with eight days to go in the regular season and won the division by three games.

He began his Detroit tenure with a win and three losses in his first four starts but has settled down since then.

"The first game, I think, he was getting his feet wet," manager Jim Leyland said about a 5-1 loss Sanchez endured at Toronto on July 28, five days after the trade. "He was unfamiliar with me, unfamiliar with his new teammates, unfamiliar with the league. But he's picked it up, and he's been pitching very, very well."

Sanchez feels blessed to be making a start for the Tigers in the postseason, knowing full well that he could have gone home this past Wednesday with the rest of the Marlins, who finished 69-93 and in last place in the National League East.

"I feel like this is a big step, but it's part of the business," Sanchez said. "One day you're on one team and the next day you're on another team. I'm thanking God for being here and representing the team right now. We need to keep working. We're doing great so far. Nine more wins and we'll be the world champions."

Sanchez, of course, has had personal success and has pitched under pressure before. On Sept. 6, 2006, at the old stadium north of Miami, Sanchez threw a no-hitter and defeated the D-backs, 2-0. A rookie at the time, he became the 19th first-year Major Leaguer since 1900 to twirl a no-hit game and the first in more than five years.

As a Tiger this past Sept. 15, Sanchez took a no-hitter into the seventh inning during a game both he and Detroit eventually won, 5-3, over the Indians. Carlos Santana tripled to break up the no-hit bid, and Sanchez left the game with two out in the seventh.

Those are the experiences he will take to the mound on Tuesday when he pitches for the first time in the Coliseum. He has made 145 starts in the Major Leagues, 133 of them for the Marlins, and believes he's more than ready. It's time.

"I just need to keep doing my job like I've been doing it my last few starts," he said with a laugh. "Like I told you, I don't feel any pressure at all. I feel great. I'm very excited. It's the chance of a lifetime."

## 'Little Miggy' hopes to have similar impact

October 9, 2012

By Jason Beck / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- For the record, the Tigers signed Avisail Garcia as a Venezuelan teenager in the summer of 2007 before they traded for Miguel Cabrera that winter. There is no way the Tigers could have possibly cloned Cabrera after acquiring him.

That still doesn't prevent fans and even teammates from having fun with the resemblance between the fellow Venezuelans.

"A lot of people call him 'Little Miggy,'" Tigers infielder Ramon Santiago said. "That's his nickname now. 'Mini Miggy.'"

A's vs. Tigers

Never mind the eight-year difference in age. Their 6-foot-4 frames, save for a few extra pounds on Cabrera, look almost exactly alike. Their faces are close enough that fans have spotted Garcia and called out for Cabrera. The athleticism that Garcia shows off when he has the chance reminds some scouts of a young Cabrera when he was coming up through the Marlins' system. It could be a hard charge around the bases, or a sweet opposite-field line drive.

Garcia's throw from right field to nab Coco Crisp at home plate on Sunday during a 5-4 Tigers win, however, brought up a few other names. Al Kaline was one. Magglio Ordonez was another. Cabrera himself had his share of outfield assists during his younger days in Florida, but those are distant memories now after so many years on the infield corners.

"Unbelievable," was how Cabrera described Garcia's play. "He made a perfect throw to home plate."

Word has been getting out on Garcia's arm, even at the big league level. He threw out 10 baserunners in just 62 games in right field at Class A Lakeland before the Tigers promoted him to Double-A Erie, where he eventually moved to center field. Even there, runners were cautious, though he still threw out four.

"I only make [a few]," Garcia said, "because everybody says, 'Stop, stop, stop.'"

The only runner to test Garcia in the Majors so far until Sunday was Dewayne Wise, and he did it trying to run from second to third on a sacrifice fly to left. Even then, the White Sox were seemingly aware it was a bad idea. If the word on Garcia's arm wasn't out before, it is now. The rest of his game, the Tigers believe, is on the way.

"I've known him for three, four years," Cabrera said. "I see his progress. I see what he's able to do when he plays. It's like he can get better, and he wants to get better."

In a Tigers system not noted for depth in prospects, Garcia has never been highly ranked, topping out at eighth by MLB.com entering the season. By season's end, he was up to fourth. His only All-Star selection was a Florida State League midseason honor.

He wasn't living in Cabrera's shadow then, but that of Futures Game MVP Nick Castellanos. In reality, they're two different types of players -- Castellanos a pure hitter with power, Garcia a five-tool athlete.

Garcia's getting his own name now.

"This kid has got all the tools," said catcher Gerald Laird, who took Garcia's throw Sunday and whirled for the tag. "He can run, he can throw and I'm excited he got the opportunity to make a big play."

Combine Garcia's stats between Lakeland and Erie, and he batted .299 with 17 doubles, eight triples, 14 home runs and 58 RBIs. He also stole 23 bases in 31 attempts.

After all the speculation over a Castellanos callup in September to spark the Tigers against left-handed pitchers, it was Garcia who got the call. Then he got the starts against lefties.

His next extra-base hit will be his first in the big leagues, but at 15-for-47 on singles, he more than held his own.

More than the ability, he's earned raves for his attitude.

"I'm impressed with his work ethic," Santiago said. "He's prepared."

The rule on the bench, Santiago said, is for hitters not in the game to hit the batting cages after five innings so they can be ready. Garcia, the main impact right-handed bat on the bench to throw against late-inning lefties, is there without fail.



Part of that comes from Cabrera, who has found himself in the role of mentor. When he made it to Detroit, even though he was already established as one of baseball's best young hitters, Cabrera took after Magglio Ordonez, whom he idolized growing up.

Cabrera is passing it forward. His most important bit of advice, he believes, is for Garcia to shake off the labels. "Go out there and play his game," Cabrera said. "Don't try to impress anybody. Don't try to do something to [wow anybody]. Go out there, play his game, relax, try to take good at-bats, play good defense. That's it. Don't try to do too much."

He did plenty in his postseason debut, besides the throw. His first plate appearance Sunday saw him work out of an 0-2 count to draw a two-out walk off A's lefty Tommy Milone. His first ball in play required a stellar play from A's shortstop Stephen Drew to retire him.

When the Tigers take the field for Game 3 at Oakland Coliseum on Tuesday night, Garcia will be back out there. The A's are throwing lefty Brett Anderson on the mound, and it's Garcia's job to play against lefties.

When Cabrera was asked if Garcia gets nervous, he laughs.

"Nervous? I'm nervous, too," Cabrera said. "I think nervous is part of the game. He wants to do good. He's got that feeling like he wants to make the play, he wants to hit."

Cabrera has been there. When he got his big league shot with the 2003 Marlins, he was a 20-year-old phenom called up straight from Double-A at midseason. Garcia is 21.

Forget about comparing Garcia to Cabrera on that. If the Tigers can end Garcia's first big league stint with the World Series crown the 2003 Marlins got, they'll be tickled.

## Albuquerque apologizes to A's for kiss

October 9, 2012

By Doug Miller / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The kiss is no longer on the list.

A day after reliever Al Albuquerque sparked a smidgen of A's ire in Game 2 by fielding a ninth-inning ground ball off the bat of outfielder Yoenis Cespedes and kissing the ball before underhanding it to first baseman Prince Fielder, the pitcher apologized for his act.

The kiss was viewed as somewhat bush-league behavior by at least one member of the A's. Josh Reddick called it "immature" and "unprofessional," and the incident was replayed on highlight shows ad nauseam and discussed throughout the night and into the morning.

But during Monday's workouts at Oakland Coliseum, Albuquerque expressed remorse, and the A's seemed to be fine with moving on from the controversy heading into Tuesday's Game 3.

"It was just an expression," Albuquerque said quietly while standing at his locker and attending to a sizable media scrum. "I didn't want to offend. To my friend Cespedes, it was an expression and nothing more. If he felt offended, I apologize. I didn't want it to be anything bad toward them.

"I've never done that before. I didn't plan it. It just came out."

After it happened and the Tigers won, 5-4, in the bottom of the ninth to take the first two games at Comerica Park, Cespedes intimated in the A's clubhouse that he would try to hit the ball hard the next time he faced Albuquerque and that he would kiss his bat after doing so.

On Tuesday, Cespedes said it wasn't a serious comment.

Meanwhile, manager Jim Leyland agreed that an apology was in order, although he answered the first question about the issue by cracking, "Well, everybody always says I'm from the old school, so I'd have probably hugged it first.

"No, I don't think it was the right thing to do," he continued. "I will sit here today, and I will not try to defend it. I will say that I can assure everybody, including the Oakland A's, that Albuquerque did nothing intentionally to offend the Oakland A's. He did it, but it was not an intent in any way to offend the Oakland A's. I can assure you of that.

"We don't try to offend anybody. We try to win baseball games. There's a lot of emotion on all teams during the season as well as this time of year. We make no excuses; it happened. It shouldn't have happened. But like I said, in no way, no way, was that meant to offend an opponent, no way.

"We have too much respect for the game. Too much respect for baseball and too much respect for Bob Melvin and the Oakland A's. If that's not acceptable, then people have to deal with it the way they want to deal with it." Melvin, for one, didn't seem to want to deal with it at all.

"You know what? I respect Jim Leyland about as much as I respect anyone," Melvin said. "I don't think there's one right or wrong way. Emotionally, after a game, when something like that happens, you're always going to hear something from somebody. But you move on. It's not a big deal for me."

## Sanchez goes for series sweep against A's

October 9, 2012

By Doug Miller / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- It's hard to say how many of the athletes on the Detroit Tigers and Oakland A's were also Mathletes in grade school, but the arithmetic for what's going on in the American League Division Series couldn't be simpler.

Entering Tuesday's Game 3, with the series shifting to Oakland, the Tigers need to win one game to advance to their second consecutive AL Championship Series.

Or, if you prefer to look at it the other way, the A's need to win to force a Game 4 in the best-of-five series.

Don Kelly, who won Game 2 for the Tigers when his sacrifice fly off Grant Balfour went deep enough to right field to score Omar Infante and preserve a 5-4 walk-off victory and the 2-0 series lead, had already figured out those numbers when he was interviewed moments after the game.

"It's easier to win one, obviously, then to have to go out there and have to win two, so it's a great feeling," Kelly said.

But the Tigers know what they're in for after flying across the country to the Bay Area. They know how tough the A's have been at home this year. Oakland was 50-31 at the Coliseum during the regular season. The A's won six straight and eight of nine to end the season, including the final three against the Texas Rangers to clinch the AL West title.

Oh, and they just so happened to lead the Major Leagues in walk-off wins in 2012 with 14.

For as much Motown magic as the Tigers enjoyed in the first two games, Detroit knows there could very well be a reversal of fortune on the other coast.

"We need to bring it on Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday," Tigers catcher Gerald Laird said. "Hopefully we don't get to those [final two] games, but we've got to bring it on Tuesday, because not even a week ago this team swept a pretty good team at home to win their division.

"We know what they're capable of. We know that it's possible, because that's a good ballclub and they're going to go down fighting. I like our chances, but we got to bring it."

Meanwhile, the A's know what they have to do, and they know they'll have the support of their home crowd while they attempt to do it.

They have to win three games at home, and they know that they can't win three without first winning one. That comes Tuesday, when they will lean on their left-handed starter, Brett Anderson, to go up against Detroit and its right-hander, Anibal Sanchez, and they expect to have a packed house in the Coliseum to watch it.

"Well, it is full and it's loud," A's manager Bob Melvin said Monday. "And we saw that the last weekend of the season, I think it really, really helped us. They were involved. And even earlier in the season, when I've often said if there's 10 or 15 in here, it sounds like it's 30.

"And when this place is packed it's about as loud as it gets. So it has an effect on us. We appreciate it."

Following Sunday's Game 2 defeat, in which the A's watched two late leads slip away, Melvin was concise and clear about the approach his team needs to take to avoid being swept out of October.

"You've just got to move on," Melvin said. "If you let it stick in your craw, then you won't be prepared to the best of your capabilities on Tuesday. So you've just got to let it go."

And you have to have confidence, which is something this upstart club has never seemed to lose, even when it was trailing Texas by double-digit games earlier in the summer.

"This team's done it all year and I don't think there's any doubt that we'll do it again," A's infielder Cliff Pennington said. "It's what we started preaching from Day 1 of Spring Training. We'll see what we're made of now. It's definitely what we've got to do."

And then there's this number that might play into the A's favor: The Tigers went 38-43 away from Detroit in 2012, making them the only division winner in baseball to have a losing record on the road.

Pennington was asked if was aware of that math, and he smiled.

"I didn't know that," he said.

"But I'll take it."

Tigers: Sanchez for the sweep

The Tigers made a late-July trade with Florida to get Sanchez because they wanted a veteran starter to help them nail down the AL Central. That plan worked, with the right-hander winning four games down the stretch and putting up a 3.74 ERA for Detroit that was better than the 3.94 he had with the Marlins.

Now Sanchez, who was knocked around on Sept. 20 in a loss in his only start against Oakland this year, has the chance to pitch his team to a clinching win in his first postseason start, and he'll do it in a hostile environment. "You know, I've never pitched here," Sanchez said Monday. "I don't try to focus too much about how loud it's going to be, the field ... I try to focus and do my job. I try to focus to throw my [pitch] for a strike, [take it] hitter by hitter. That's what I do. And I don't think too much of other things. I try to focus just on one thing."

- Tigers manager Jim Leyland has been getting great contributions from his bench, which he used to significant benefit on Sunday, when pinch-runner Danny Worth made a terrific play at shortstop on a ground ball by Coco Crisp in the top of the ninth that got a key forceout at second base. In the bottom of the inning, of course, Kelly delivered the game-winning sacrifice fly.

"I've always emphasized that since I've been here," Leyland said. "That's what a team's all about, everybody making contributions. So it takes everybody to contribute. And we got contributions from everybody. So that's a good thing. That's what a team's all about."

A's: Anderson all set for Game 3 start

Anderson, who missed much of the 2012 season recovering from Tommy John surgery, returned to the mound on Aug. 21 and went 4-2 with a 2.57 ERA before exiting a Sept. 19 start against the Tigers in Detroit in the third inning with the right oblique strain.

Now, he's back.

"I'm good," Anderson said Monday. "It wasn't ideal getting hurt again. But I feel good and the postseason, who knows when we're going to get back here? You'd like to say you're going to get back here again, but you have to put the nicks and knacks away and get ready to play, because everybody has them at this point."

- Melvin was asked again Monday when he finally will give right-handed-hitting Jonny Gomes a start in this series, and the A's skipper still didn't have an answer, with Sanchez marking the Tigers' third right-handed starter in a row and Gomes' left-handed platoon partner, Seth Smith, hitting .417 (10-for-24) with two homers and six RBIs against Detroit this season.

"I don't know," Melvin said. "It's a tough one. Where? ... It's always difficult not to get Jonny in. It's difficult not to get Chris Carter in. But, you know, we're planning it a certain way, and there's a good chance that we're going to continue to do that."

Worth noting

- Third baseman and AL Triple Crown winner Miguel Cabrera had three hits, including two doubles, in Game 2, and has reached base safely in all 13 of his postseason games with the Tigers, trailing only Hank Greenberg (18) and Charlie Gehringer (16) for the longest such streak in franchise history.

- Comebacks are nothing new to the A's. They already staged one of the most remarkable rallies in Major League history to win their division. Oakland trailed the Rangers by five games with nine games remaining and became the first team in Major League history to win a division or pennant after trailing by five or more games with fewer than 10 games remaining.

## Leyland says he'll stick with struggling Benoit

October 9, 2012

By Steve Kornacki / FOXSportsDetroit.com

DETROIT — Joaquin Benoit has become the lone cloud on an otherwise very sunny day.

The Tigers resume the American League Division Series on Tuesday night in Oakland with a 2-0 lead over the A's, and there's been plenty to applaud.

Then there's Benoit, the set-up reliever who is supposed to get the lead to closer Jose Valverde.

But what Benoit's doing is getting Tigers fans stirred up every time his name is called.

Oakland's swing-from-their heels hitters and Benoit is a gopher-ball-in-waiting combo. The A's hit 195 homers this year to rank seventh in the majors, and Benoit allowed 13 homers in his final 36 innings of the season.

Brandon Moss took him to the warning track for a long out in the series opener. In Game 2, Josh Reddick connected for a bases-empty homer to give the A's a 4-3 lead in the bottom of the eighth Sunday.

Benoit bent over and placed his hands on his knees as Reddick circled the bases and the home fans booed loudly. His wild pitch had allowed Yoenis Cespedes to race home with the tying run during Reddick's at-bat, then Benoit lost the lead with two pitches.

Thankfully for the Tigers, they rallied to tie it in the eighth and win it in the ninth with Don Kelly's sacrifice fly, taking Benoit off the hook.

"I felt great after Donnie won the game," Benoit said. "It's such a bad feeling when you let the team down."

Benoit received a few pats on the back in the dugout, but flung his mitt to the bench and tossed a water bottle at the steps.

The usually high-quality changeup he uses to complement a 95-mph fastball let him down twice.

"The wild pitch was a changeup I threw too low," Benoit said. "That was a mistake for me, and it's not going to happen again.

"And (Reddick) hit a good pitch, a changeup. What can I say? Sometimes you just tip your cap."

Tigers manager Jim Leyland, despite Benoit's marked deterioration in the second half of the season and implosion in Game 2, is standing behind him.

"I'm not concerned," Leyland said after Sunday's game. "It is what it is. He's our guy.

"I totally believe in him. I totally believe in our entire bullpen. And that's not going to change. That's our team.

That's what we are. That's who we are.

"And Benoit was fantastic 14 hours ago. So, no, I don't have any questions about that whatsoever."

On Saturday night, Benoit got Stephen Drew on a comebacker to the mound before Cespedes singled to left.

Then Moss hit a ball that had 43,323 fans inside Comerica Park holding their breath.

Tigers left fielder Quintin Berry was asked what went through his mind as he watched the ball soar.

"Please be Comerica Park right there," he said.

Berry got his wish. The dimensions of a pitcher's paradise prevailed as right fielder Andy Dirks caught it a few feet from the wall in right-center.

Benoit then ended the inning by getting Reddick to go down swinging.

That's the Benoit the Tigers are paying \$16.5 million over three years through 2013, and the one Leyland believes in.

There's no denying, however, that Benoit has not been himself since giving up two homers to the Tampa Bay Rays on June 30. Since then, including the two playoff appearances, he's allowed 14 homers in 37 innings. He'd surrendered only one homer in his 35 innings before that game in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Benoit had a 1.80 ERA until then, but more than doubled it (3.68) by the end of the season. He had a 5.52 ERA after the All-Star break.

Here's a really odd-ball stat for you: Benoit has a 4.93 ERA in 51 games caught by Alex Avila, and a 1.02 ERA in 19 games with Gerald Laird behind the plate.

Perhaps who catches Benoit is as important as whether he gets the call in the eighth inning or not.

Leyland likes Benoit because he's battle-tested and as effective against left-handed hitters (.237) as he is righties (.217). So, despite the loud blips, he's sticking with him.

Many fans are calling for a change, and reporters continue asking Leyland about Benoit.

The skipper maintains there are “no physical issues whatsoever” with Benoit and keeps sending him out.

If you want change, you must have a replacement in mind.

There’s seventh-inning guy Octavio Dotel, another savvy veteran who pitched on the Cardinals’ 2011 World Series champions.

But the stats tell you to keep Dotel where he is. He had a 1.48 ERA in the seventh inning this season, but posted a 3.48 in the eighth and a 12.38 in the ninth. And while righties hit just .197 against Dotel, lefties batted .288. Plus he had a 9.82 ERA in four outings against the A’s this season.

The only other possibility is the most intriguing one: Al Alburquerque, that comebacker-kissing flamethrower with the nasty slider.

He had a 0.68 ERA in eight games after returning from offseason elbow surgery, and a 1.87 ERA as a rookie last year. Alburquerque has a staggering 85 strikeouts in 56 2/3 innings, but a troublesome 37 walks.

Debate the possibilities all you want, but the only man with a vote that counts has made up his mind.

## Sealed with a kiss

October 9, 2012

By Michael J. Happy / FOXSportsDeroit.com

DETROIT — Usually the kissing comes before or after.

Isiah and Magic gave each other a peck on the cheek prior to battling it out on the NBA's biggest stage.

Stevie Y planted more than one on the Stanley Cup, but only after his Red Wings had secured it.

Which leads us to question Al Alburquerque's in-game baseball kiss on Sunday.

Was it cool? Or was it, as some saw it, bush league — sort of like kissing your best friend's ex in front of him.

If you didn't see the play, Alburquerque came on with runners on the corners and two outs in the top of the ninth inning, heavy hitter Yoenis Cespedes at the plate.

Alburquerque jammed Cespedes, who weakly tapped the ball to the mound. After fielding it on one hop,

Alburquerque kissed the ball before tossing it to first baseman Prince Fielder for the final out of the inning.

"We're not finished yet," Cespedes told the media after the game. "When I get back to Oakland, I am going to hit the ball hard against him.

"And I am going to kiss my bat."

Kissing begets kissing, I guess.

But Alburquerque's kiss isn't something you see every day. Frankly, I don't recall another instance of a player sealing an out with a kiss in 40-plus years of watching the game.

Not even Mark Fidrych kissed the ball before hurling it toward home plate for another potential strikeout. The Bird just talked to it, gave it instructions on where to go — tell, not kiss — which isn't the same thing.

Alburquerque's kiss, Like Fidrych himself, seemed genuine, though. The play was huge, and Alburquerque's hot-second sense of relief makes sense. I mean, what Tigers fan didn't want to kiss that ball -- and Alburquerque with it?

After getting Cespedes, the Tigers got a run in the ninth to win 5-4 and take a 2-0 lead in the American League Division Series, which continues Tuesday night in Oakland.

So, if you're an Athletics fan, you might want to tell Alburquerque to kiss something else.

What are your thoughts on Al Al's kiss? Vote on the above poll and use the comments section below.

## Leyland looking to pull a La Russa?

October 9, 2012

By Jon Paul Morosi / FOXSports.com

DETROIT -- A legendary manager, in the final year of his contract, rallied a formerly underachieving team to a playoff berth in the final series of the regular season. A burst of success in the division series followed, along with it the opportunity to write the final chapter of his legacy.

That was Tony La Russa in 2011.

That is Jim Leyland in 2012.

The circumstances aren't identical — at least not yet. La Russa's Cardinals won the World Series. Leyland's Tigers have yet to advance to the ALCS, although they hold a 2-0 series lead over Oakland.

What the close friends have in common, though, is the ability to leverage October wins in determining their destinies. La Russa won it all and walked away. That was his choice. Leyland, unsigned beyond the Tigers' final game this year, has said publicly that he wants to continue managing. With each victory, the odds increase that the Tigers will want him back.

"He doesn't care if his butt's on the line," Tigers catcher Gerald Laird said. "He just wants to win baseball games. He's calm and collected. He puts his players in good situations. All he's about is winning and playing baseball. His life's around the game. I just hope he gets a chance to come back."

Leyland's uncertain status became a popular topic of discussion in Detroit during the final weeks of the season. It appeared Tigers owner Mike Ilitch, who authorized a \$140 million payroll, wanted to see more before agreeing to bring back the 67-year-old Leyland for another season. If the favored Tigers had lost the division to the upstart Chicago White Sox, then it wouldn't have been a surprise to see Ilitch make a change. Leyland, when asked about his future, offered a similar response every time: "That will take care of itself."

Now the case for a contract extension is building, one handshake line after another. Laird said Leyland did a "great job" of insulating his players from questions about his job security during the anxious final month of the regular season. Now the Tigers, as American League Central champions, are one of the hottest teams in baseball's grand tournament. If the Tigers win the pennant, an offer to return in 2013 should become a formality.

Or perhaps Leyland will do as La Russa did — win it all and walk away.

"I don't know," questioned Laird, who won a ring with the Cardinals last year. "The skipper's got a lot more years in him. You can see his passion about the game. He loves being here every day. This guy is all about baseball. He wants to win.

"All year, we've had ups and downs. We had to fight for our division. We had to fight for (Sunday's) game to take a 2-0 lead. Teams reflect their manager, and these guys love playing for him."

We can debate whether experienced players truly have an advantage in the postseason. But for dugout decision-makers, there is no doubt: It helps to have been there before. The games are so tense, and move so quickly, that a veteran manager can be the difference between champagne and sorrow. Save for the phone gaffe in Game 5 of last year's World Series, La Russa was brilliant in deploying his bullpen to cover for an undermanned starting rotation.

Now the time has come for Leyland to give his team a tactical edge. With the Tigers trailing by a run, Leyland deployed two pinch hitters and two pinch runners in the eighth inning Sunday. That reflected a greater urgency than Leyland showed during the regular season, when the Tigers ranked 26th among the 30 major-league teams in pinch-hit appearances. Leyland used only 75 pinch hitters in all — an average of less than one for every two games. By that rate, he used four days' worth in a single inning of Game 2.

And it worked, sort of. Although pinch hitters Quintin Berry and Alex Avila struck out, pinch runner Don Kelly scored the tying run on a wild pitch. The other pinch runner — infielder Danny Worth, who entered for the plodding Jhonny Peralta — made a game-saving play at shortstop in the next inning. Then Kelly, the longtime Leyland favorite, won it with a sacrifice fly.

Leyland has been managing aggressively for weeks, in part because he had little choice. Leyland kept struggling outfielder Brennan Boesch in the everyday lineup longer than many managers would have, believing his power potential was more valuable than Berry's speed. Boesch has been with the organization longer than Berry, and



Leyland, loyal to a fault, tends to side with players who have tenure. But the tipping point came after the Tigers fell three games back with a Sept. 17 loss in Chicago, in which Boesch went 0-for-4 and stranded five runners. The energetic Berry started in left field the next day and has played every meaningful game since against right-handed pitching. The Tigers won the division with an 11-5 flourish over their final 16 games. Boesch made only two more starts and was left off the AL Division Series roster.

During the regular season, Leyland makes decisions with the long run in mind — resting a regular here, nurturing a player's ego there. But October is the month of short-run baseball. That brings out the best in Leyland, a world champion with the Marlins in 1997. He minimizes sentimentality in his decision-making. He closes off distractions for his players, emphasizing focus and preparation. He preaches professionalism without holding team meetings. So far, the Tigers have responded.

The biggest obstacle between the Tigers and the World Series is a leaky bullpen, which was on display again in Game 2. Joaquin Benoit turned a one-run lead into a one-run deficit in the eighth, and Phil Coke permitted two baserunners in the ninth before the eccentric Al Alburquerque rescued him with Yoenis Cespedes' kiss-me comebacker.

In sinkerball starter Rick Porcello — on the ALDS roster as a reliever — Leyland has an intriguing setup option if Benoit's struggles continue. But Leyland insisted Sunday that he will stay with Benoit, just as he did with Boesch for so many weeks. "He's our eighth-inning guy," Leyland said Sunday. "It's that simple. It's been that way since he's been here. That's not going to change. So it is what it is. ... If Benoit is fresh and we have the lead in the eighth, he's going to be in there."

So that's that — for now, at least. Even if they disagree, the most impulsive Tigers fans ought to give Leyland the benefit of the doubt here. He's earned that much with his performance over the past three weeks — if not the last seven seasons. One more victory might be all he needs to ensure that he comes back for an eighth, and history says he's going to get it: It's been 21 years since Leyland lost a postseason series in which his team won the first game.

At the end of a turbulent season, these things remain true of Leyland: He has more wins than any active manager. He has a better résumé than the conceivable candidates to replace him. And in October, with so much at stake, he has the steady hand.

## **Al Alburquerque finds out when a kiss isn't just a kiss**

October 9, 2012

By Jorge Ortiz / USAToday.com

OAKLAND – Yoenis Cespedes has backed off his stated intention to kiss his bat the next time he hits a line drive off Al Alburquerque.

He'd rather beat the Detroit Tigers reliever, and if someone has a chance to impact a game for the Oakland Athletics, it's the rookie outfielder from Cuba.

Alburquerque's celebratory gesture in Sunday's Game 2 of this American League Division Series, when he kissed the ball after inducing an inning-ending comebacker from Cespedes with two runners on in the ninth, remained a hot topic after the series moved to Oakland.

ALDS: In 2-0 hole, A's not ready to roll over

There were any number of opinions on Alburquerque's unique reaction, from teammates vowing he meant no harm to A's players taking at least mild umbrage. Some Tigers players addressed the issue with Alburquerque to make sure he didn't do it again, while others needled him.

"I know they (the A's) probably took it as a sign of disrespect, but if they knew the type of player he is and the type of guy he is, they wouldn't take it that way," Tigers catcher Gerald Laird said.

Alburquerque, a second-year pitcher from the Dominican Republic who earned the win as Detroit went up 2-0 in the series, explained himself for the first time to news reporters.

"It was just the emotion of the game," he said in Spanish. "I wasn't pimping. I was very excited about getting the out, and if Cespedes was offended, I apologize to him and their players, because I wasn't trying to do anything disrespectful."

Cespedes said he didn't think the gesture was professional, but he took no offense.

"Not at all. It was his turn to win," Cespedes said. "Someday it will be my turn."

Reminded of his comment Sunday about kissing his bat, Cespedes replied: "I said that, but no, I'm not going to do that. I'm a professional."

As the Tigers seek to close out a series that could easily be tied – they benefited from center fielder Coco Crisp's critical two-run error to pull out a 5-4 win in Game 2 – they'd rather not incite a player who has already impressed them with his overall game.

Cespedes has three hits in eight at-bats, including a run-scoring single Sunday, and tied that game by himself when he singled in the eighth, stole second and third, then scored on a Joaquin Benoit wild pitch.

## Amid Newfound Glory, Echoes of Old Detroit

October 9, 2012

By Bill Morris / The New York Times

For more than a century, the city of Detroit has been driven by a pair of powerful but erratic engines: cars and sports. Detroiters are no strangers to the sorrows these engines can bring: layoffs, factory shutdowns, losing streaks, even winless seasons. Yet, many Detroiters are feeling giddy these days. The auto industry has come roaring back from the brink of ruin, and the Tigers are back in the playoffs for the second straight year — routine stuff in the Bronx, perhaps, but something that hasn't happened in the Motor City since the 1930s. To top it off, the star of this year's Tigers is a slugger named Miguel Cabrera, who led the American League in home runs, batting average and runs batted in, a trifecta last accomplished nearly half a century ago by Carl Yastrzemski of the Boston Red Sox, and by only a handful of others in the history of the game.

The team plays in a sparkling downtown park that was built a dozen years ago and named, to the dismay of many purists, after a bank. More than three million fans have passed through its turnstiles so far this year, and it's a safe bet that many of them don't remember or have managed to forget the team's previous home, a great sooty iceberg built in 1912 just west of downtown. Tiger Stadium is gone to dust now, memories of it growing dimmer every time Cabrera whacks another ball over the outfield wall at Comerica Park.

But Detroiters tend to have a deep, quirky sense of pride, and more than a few of them will tell you that there's a bygone relic even more worthy of mourning than Tiger Stadium. Or the downtown J. L. Hudson department store. Or Cass Tech High School, whose alumni roster includes John DeLorean, Lily Tomlin and Diana Ross. That other place was a bar called the Lindell A.C. It was in an unexceptional-looking brick building a few blocks from Tiger Stadium, but it became a legend, a place where the famous rubbed elbows with the unknown. It was first opened in 1949 in the no-star Lindell Hotel by Meleti Butsicaris. In the 1950s, a regular customer suggested putting signed photographs of athletes on the walls. He even showed Butsicaris and his sons, Johnny and Jimmy, how to cut a baseball bat in half lengthwise, the better to screw it into the wall. Soon other bats and baseballs, hockey sticks and pucks were added, along with the jerseys of local gods like Al Kaline, Norm Cash, Gordie Howe and Dave Bing, a Pistons star who is now the mayor of Detroit. But the maraschino cherry on the memorabilia was surely Lions linebacker Wayne Walker's jockstrap, which was fastened to a plaque in a prominent place on the barnacled walls. The customer who came up with the original suggestion about hanging the signed photographs was a Yankees infielder named Billy Martin.

After relocating to the corner of Michigan and Cass Avenues in 1963, the Butsicaris family added "A.C." to the name at the suggestion of a local sports columnist and repeat customer named Doc Greene — a wry swipe at the swells who patronized the nearby Detroit Athletic Club. The Lindell A.C.'s burgers were out of this world, there were three television sets, and the place was always jumping. Jimmy Butsicaris installed himself at the corner of the bar every night, where he could keep one eye on the door and one on the cash register. "He didn't want to have any seepage," the owner of a nearby bar says. "And he wanted to know everybody who walked in that door — cop or robber, friend or foe." For foes, Jimmy kept a set of brass knuckles in his pocket.

In 1963, Pete Rozelle, the commissioner of the N.F.L., suspended Paul Hornung, the golden boy of the Green Bay Packers, and Lions defensive lineman Alex Karras for gambling on games in the Lindell A.C. Rozelle also ordered Karras to divest himself of his one-third interest in the saloon. Hornung was contrite; Karras was outraged. The scandal was excellent for the Butsicarises's business.

To work out his anger, Karras took up professional wrestling during his suspension. One night, he and a future opponent, Dick the Bruiser, went at each other inside the Lindell A.C., an epic brawl that left the place — and Karras — in tatters.

Six years later, Martin, then manager of the Minnesota Twins, got into a dispute inside the Lindell A.C. with one of his own pitchers, burly Dave Boswell, a 20-game winner that year. Though Martin was giving away several inches and many more pounds, they took their differences into the alley behind the bar. When it was over, Boswell's face required 20 stitches while Martin's needed just seven. Apparently impressed by Martin's way of handling his pitching staff, the Tigers hired him two years later, and he led the team to the division title in 1972.

But perhaps the thing that truly set the Lindell A.C. apart — and the thing that reveals just how different its world was from the world we live in today — was the way professional athletes and other celebrities, from Mickey Mantle to Milton Berle to Andre the Giant, mingled with ordinary fans.

Terry Foster had a ringside seat for this cultural shift. His mother, Roxanne, worked at the Lindell A.C. for 20 years, and Foster, now 53, worked there as a cook while attending Cass Tech, then tended bar during college. “I remember going in after a Tigers game and seeing Willie Horton, Earl Wilson and Gates Brown sitting next to fans, having a beer and a burger, just talking to the fans,” says Foster, who writes a sports column for The Detroit News and hosts a radio sports show. “It was almost like they’d just gotten off the third shift at G.M. Players from all the visiting teams came into the Lindell A.C., and there wasn’t all this fawning. They were one of the fellas. Today, I see athletes at parties, and they’re roped off in their private area with their ladies. That doesn’t do it for me.”

The ballplayers back then, of course, often had little choice. Most of them had to work jobs during the off-season because they weren’t multimillionaires who breathed their own ether, safely shielded from hoi polloi. It was a time of greater intimacy, rougher edges and, yes, more excess. It was also more colorful, more vivid, in many ways more alive than our high-dollar, heart-smart, smoke-free, sanitized times.

Vaughn Derderian Sr., who runs the Anchor Bar in downtown Detroit, agrees with Foster. “The players don’t hang out anymore,” says Derderian, 65, whose family has been in the bar business since the 1920s. “The reason is because they’re a little smarter — and they’re making a whole lot more money. They don’t want to get hassled by the fans. The Lindell A.C. was one of the last places where that contact happened.”

It had stopped happening by the time the bar closed for good in 2002. Four years later, the building was demolished to make way for a bus station.

“To call it legendary is an understatement,” Derderian adds. “It was the first sports bar in the country. Now there’s one on every corner.”

There’s a big one on the corner of Woodward Avenue and Montcalm Street, across the street from Comerica Park. It’s called the Hockeytown Cafe. It has 45 TVs, including 30 63-inch plasma sets, and its walls are plastered with sports memorabilia.

There are only three things missing. Actual athletes mingling with the customers. A tough little Greek guy sitting at the corner of the bar with a set of brass knuckles in his pocket. And Wayne Walker’s jockstrap high on the wall.

## **In the Playoffs, Is There No Place Like Home?**

October 9, 2012

By Jared Diamond / The Wall Street Journal

An important message to all the bitter Oakland Athletics' fans: It's not the schedule's fault that the A's are down 2-0 to the Detroit Tigers in the ALDS.

Much has been made in recent days of this season's format for the Division Series, in which the team with the better record opens with two road games and plays Games 3, 4 and 5 at home. It's a one-year departure from the typical format of the better team having Games 1, 2 and 5 at home. As a result, the A's—who lost two straight this weekend in Detroit—are returning to the Bay Area facing elimination.

But in reality, while the 2-3 format may not be ideal, it historically has virtually no effect on the likelihood of the "home" team winning the series. Baseball used the 2-3 playoff format from 1969-84 and then again from 1995-98. The team with home-field advantage went 27-25 in those series (.519). Meanwhile, the team with home-field advantage in the 2-2-1 format went 26-26 (.500).

Of course, 52 series with each format is a relatively small sample size. And until 1998, home-field advantage was decided on a rotating basis rather than regular-season record. Still, the A's aren't behind 2-0 because of the format—they can thank Justin Verlander and Miguel Cabrera for that.

## **Leyland wants to return in 2013, and it's very likely that he will**

October 9, 2012

By Danny Knobler / CBSSports.com

Jim Leyland's future has been enough of a question that even some in the Tigers' clubhouse have conflicting views on whether he'll return in 2013.

But it appears at least one option can be ruled out, as Leyland has been telling people in recent days that he does not plan to retire at the end of this postseason.

Some in baseball, and even some in the Tigers' organization, had been speculating that he might, especially if the Tigers go to the World Series. Just last week, the 67-year-old Leyland began one answer about next year by saying, "If I manage ... "

Given Leyland's desire to continue managing, it's very likely he will be back for an eighth year with the Tigers. While the team had a sometimes difficult season, leading to talk that Leyland could be fired, the Tigers ended up winning a second straight American League Central title, and now hold a two games to none lead over the A's in the AL Division Series.

Leyland is still considered one of the game's best managers. When scouts and executives from rival teams have talked about his future, one of the first questions asked is, "How are they going to find someone better to replace him?"

The Tigers had gone 18 years with no postseason appearances when Leyland arrived in 2006. They've been there three times in his seven years and missed out on a fourth when they lost a Game 163 tiebreaker to the Twins in 2009.

## **Athletics back home, looking to avoid early goodnight kiss**

October 9, 2012

By Scott Miller / CBSsports.com

OAKLAND -- Time to kiss the Oakland A's goodbye?

Flush from first-date excitement with 12 rookies on their playoff roster, it was quite clear under a warm sun and cloudy outlook Monday that the A's aren't quite sure what to make of their situation.

Bad enough to come home facing another week like last, when a three-game sweep is required.

But what to make of the Tigers' romantic overtures?

As this AL Division Series moves West, maybe it's time to replace Bruce Springsteen's music on those television ads with the deep, silky voice of Barry White. Baby, can't get enough of your love. Reliever Al Alburquerque fielding Yoenis Cespedes' comebacker and kissing the baseball before throwing to first for the final out of Detroit's 5-4 Game 2 victory is the kind of stuff that inspires sonnets.

Almost.

Josh Reddick was infuriated. His A's feel violated. The Tigers on their charter flight West ordered Alburquerque to cease and desist before he could even send flowers.

"Well, everybody always says I'm from the old school," manager Jim Leyland quipped. "So I'd have probably hugged it first."

Or at least called the Rawlings baseball -- or the A's? -- in the morning.

This stuff continues much longer, Oakland hitting coach Chili Davis is going to have his Athletics hitters watching film of Anne Hathaway in LOVE AND OTHER DRUGS before Game 3 Tuesday instead of studying the mechanics of Tigers starter Anibal Sanchez.

"The baseball gods take care of that kind of stuff," Oakland outfielder Jonny Gomes said. "Obviously, he doesn't believe in the baseball gods. I do."

"I did a double take on it," admitted Brandon Inge, the former Tiger who currently is stuck on Oakland's disabled list with a surgically repaired shoulder. "I just went, 'Oh my goodness.'"

"I know him. I know he didn't mean much by it. But I'm sure he's going to regret it."

A sheepish Alburquerque said that some of his teammates did lecture him.

But these Tigers don't smooch and tell.

"That's private," said Triple Crown winner Miguel Cabrera, one of those who spoke with the reliever. "It's over with."

Of all the wacky stuff that's happened on a baseball field, nobody had ever seen anything quite like this. Word is, the Motion Picture Assn. of America is still deciding whether to slap a "PG" or an "R" on the highlight videos.

"I don't think he meant anything by it," Inge said. "If I was still over there, I'd probably talk to him and tell him not to do it. You don't want to give the other guys any ammunition."

Speaking of which, the Tigers made a key find of their own in that department on Sunday in Albuquerque, Don Kelly and Danny Worth.

Kelly scored the game-tying run in the eighth on a wild pitch and produced the game-winning sacrifice fly in the ninth.

Worth made a game-saving play at shortstop in the ninth inning, and Alburquerque came on to woo the final out of the game.

Much of the Tigers' sluggishness this season was because the bottom half of their lineup has been AWOL.

When others aside from Cabrera and Prince Fielder step up, they can turn unbeatable. And Alburquerque, a 26-year-old from the Dominican Republic, is an underrated key in the bullpen.

"I think what you saw yesterday is what we talk about all the time, what Bob Melvin talks about with his team: 25 players doing something to help out," Leyland said. "Yesterday, it happened to be Danny Worth and Donnie Kelly. I thought it was a great story because most of the focus is normally not on them."

Truthfully, Leyland could have, um, kissed them.

"I don't think it was the right thing to do," Leyland said. "I will sit here today and I will not try to defend it. I will say that I can assure everybody, including the Oakland A's, that Albuquerque did nothing intentionally to offend the Oakland A's.

"He did it, but it was not an intent in any way to offend the Oakland A's. I can assure you of that."

The Tigers know better than anybody that he's always been Al Abu-quirky, a passionate, excitable and flamboyant reliever who wears his emotions on his sleeve.

As Inge said when asked to list the goofiest things he's ever seen Albuquerque do, "you don't have enough ink."

But he's not about to tell his Athletics' teammates that.

"I'm sure these guys aren't laughing, and I'm just going to let it stir them up," he said.

So who knows what Gomes' baseball gods will stir up for Game 3, although things took another interesting twist when the A's Tuesday named old shortstop Bert Campaneris to throw out the ceremonial first pitch.

Maybe instead Campy will wing a bat Albuquerque's way, the way he did at Lerrin LaGrow in Game 2 of the 1972 AL Championship Series against Detroit in this same Oakland Coliseum.

"You're starting to see it a lot more in the league," Tigers catcher Gerald Laird said of flamboyant relievers.

"Every closer in the game has things they do with then win or strike you out. There are a lot of celebrations now after saves or home runs.

"Deal with it, and let's move on."

"A lot of emotion is shown in different ways in the game anymore," Leyland said. "You see it a lot. You see a lot of different variations of personal celebrations, as well as team celebrations.

"It wasn't a smart thing to do. But I can honestly tell you that there was no way that Albuquerque or any members of the Detroit Tigers would ever do anything intentionally to offend another team. It just would not happen."

Meantime, don't be too quick to count on that goodnight kiss for the Athletics. This is a team that was five games back with only nine to play before planting one on the Rangers to win the AL West.

"You realize something special is going on here in Oakland," Gomes said. "It'll be rocking and rolling. It's football season, and we're going to get a little Raiders carryover.

"It will be nice."



**Friday, October 5, 2012**

<b>Team</b>	<b>Player</b>	<b>Transaction</b>
Houston Astros	Travis Buck	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Kansas City Royals	Roman Colon	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Los Angeles Angels	Chris Iannetta	Signed, ( 2013-2015)(three-year extension)
Miami Marlins	Adam Greenberg	Cleared Waivers and Became a Free Agent
Milwaukee Brewers	Vinnie Chulk	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
New York Yankees	Darnell McDonald	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Philadelphia Phillies	Raul Valdes	Removed From 15-Day DL, (Torn meniscus in right knee)
Philadelphia Phillies	Vance Worley	Removed From 15-Day DL, (Loose bodies in right elbow)
Philadelphia Phillies	Placido Polanco	Removed From 15-Day DL, (Lower back inflammation)
Philadelphia Phillies	Freddy Galvis	Removed From 15-Day DL, (Lower back strain)
Toronto Blue Jays	Aaron Laffey	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Toronto Blue Jays	Bobby Korecky	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent

**Thursday, October 4, 2012**

<b>Team</b>	<b>Player</b>	<b>Transaction</b>
Arizona Diamondbacks	Zach Kroenke	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Baltimore Orioles	Jai Miller	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Boston Red Sox	Rubby De La Rosa	Traded From, Los Angeles (completes 8/25 Adrian Gonzalez deal)
Boston Red Sox	Guillermo Quiroz	Designated for Assignment
Boston Red Sox	Jerry Sands	Traded From, Los Angeles (completes 8/25 Adrian Gonzalez deal)
Boston Red Sox	Nate Spears	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Chicago Cubs	Alex Hinshaw	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Chicago Cubs	Blake DeWitt	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Chicago Cubs	Randy Wells	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent

Cleveland Indians	Dan Wheeler	Declared Free Agency
Colorado Rockies	Mike Ekstrom	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Houston Astros	Angel Sanchez	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Houston Astros	Brian Bixler	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Kansas City Royals	Mitch Maier	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Los Angeles Angels	Ryan Langerhans	Declared Free Agency
Los Angeles Dodgers	Trent Oeltjen	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Milwaukee Brewers	Tim Dillard	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Minnesota Twins	Sean Burroughs	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
New York Mets	Jack Egbert	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
New York Yankees	Ryota Igarashi	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Seattle Mariners	Cesar Jimenez	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Seattle Mariners	Mike Wilson	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Texas Rangers	Alberto Gonzalez	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Toronto Blue Jays	Scott Richmond	Refused Minor League Assignment - Free Agent
Toronto Blue Jays	Jose Bautista	Removed From 15-Day DL, (Left wrist inflammation)
Toronto Blue Jays	David Cooper	Removed From 15-Day DL, (Upper back soreness)
Toronto Blue Jays	Aaron Laffey	Outrighted to Minors
Toronto Blue Jays	Bobby Korecky	Outrighted to Minors
Toronto Blue Jays	Shawn Hill	Outrighted to Minors
<b>Wednesday, October 3, 2012</b>		
<b>Team</b>	<b>Player</b>	<b>Transaction</b>
Miami Marlins	Adam Greenberg	Released