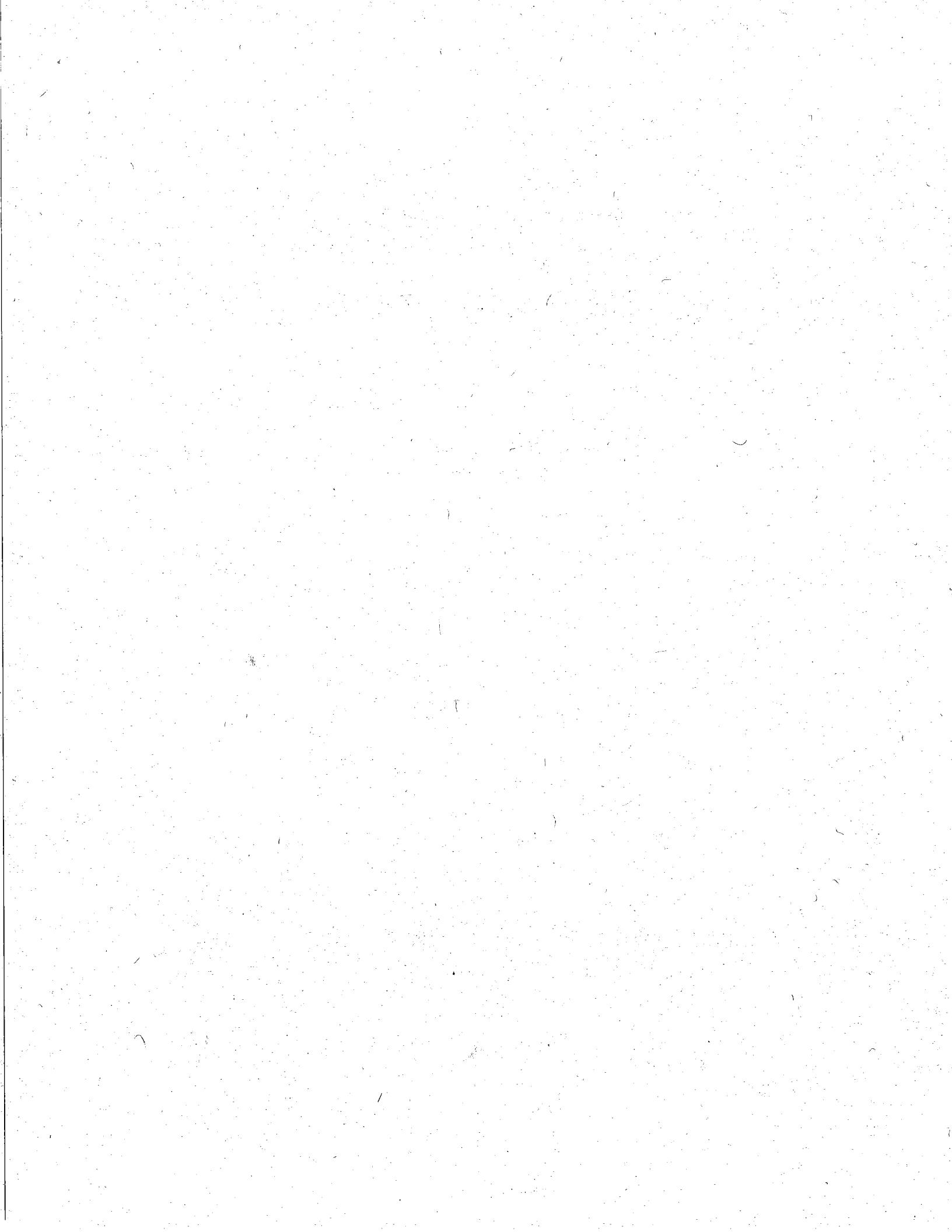




New York Yankees Clips
Thursday, June 13, 2013



PHIL'S PHILAT

Hughes labors in loss to A's

BY MARK FEINSAND
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

OAKLAND — Phil Hughes continues to be the ultimate enigma.

Hughes followed up his stellar outing in Seattle with a less-than-inspiring performance Wednesday, failing to get out of the fifth inning in the Yankees' 5-2 loss to the A's at the Coliseum.

The right-hander wasn't as bad as he has been in his other subpar outings this season, but after he gave up three runs on four hits and five walks over 4.1 innings, it's hard to categorize his start as anything but a step backward.

Hughes (3-5) hadn't walked more than two batters in any of his first 12 starts, so his season-high five free passes were a clear indication of his lack of command.

Brandon Moss bashed a two-run homer in the second, then John Jaso drove in a run with a fifth-inning double, the hit that proved to be the difference-maker for the A's after the Yankees scored runs in both the sixth and seventh.

Dan Straily (4-2) held the anemic Yankee lineup to two runs on three hits over 6.2 innings, then watched the Oakland bullpen record the final seven outs to hand the Bombers their second straight loss.

Moss added a second homer in the eighth against Joba Chamberlain, who allowed two runs to give Oakland

closer Grant Balfour a comfortable three-run cushion to protect for his 17th save.

The Yankees made it interesting in the ninth with a two-out rally, as Kevin Youkilis walked and Ichiro Suzuki singled before Balfour retired Jayson Nix on a grounder back to the mound for the final out.

Hughes had pitched quite

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well recently, bouncing back from his May 15 first-inning knockout against the Mariners to go 1-1 with a 2.96 ERA over his past four outings. Hughes was coming off a seven-inning, one-run win in Seattle, leaving him optimistic that he would continue building on his recent success.

But as has often been the case with Hughes during his up-and-down career, things didn't work out so easily. He got through the first inning unscathed, but a lead-off single by Josh Reddick in the second set up Moss' first-pitch home run to right field. It was the 13th home run allowed by Hughes this season, leaving him one behind CC Sabathia for the most on the staff.

In the fifth, Hughes issued a leadoff walk, the third time in five innings he put the leadoff man on base. Eric Sogard stole second, then Ichiro made a nice sliding catch on Nate Freiman's liner to right, saving a run.

There wasn't much Ichiro could do about John

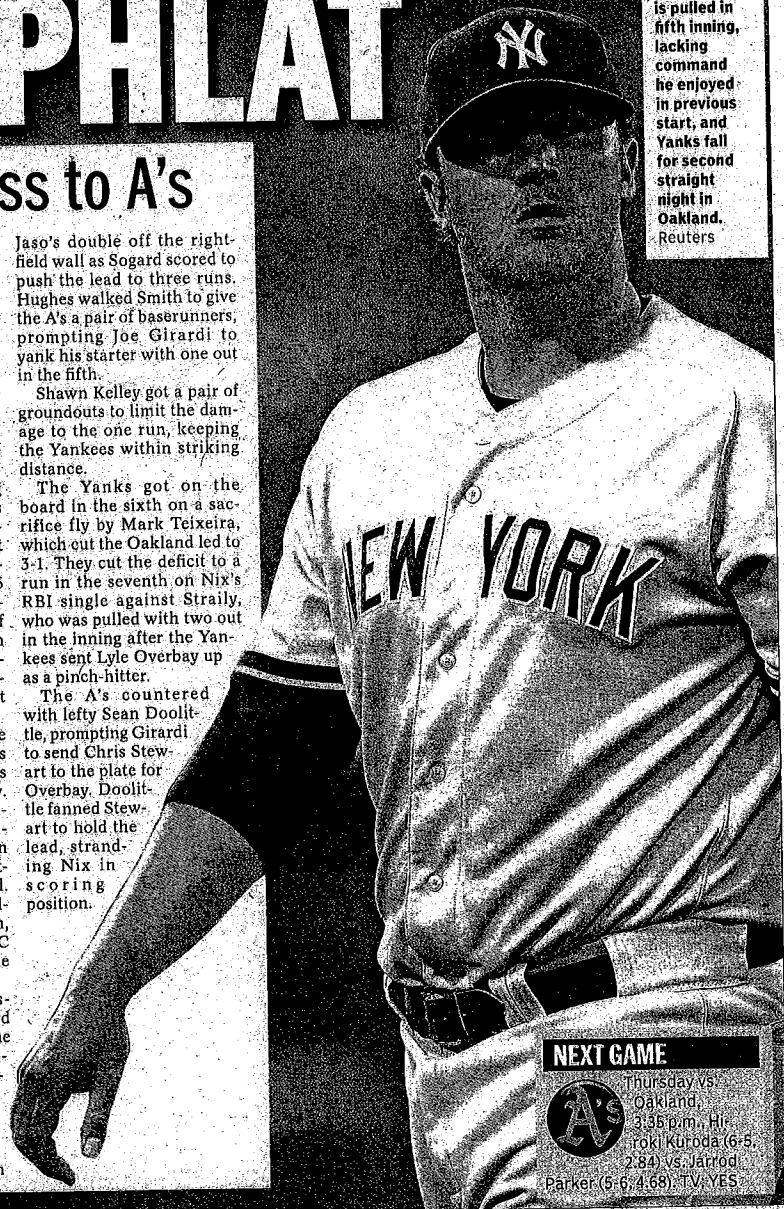
Jaso's double off the right-field wall as Sogard scored to push the lead to three runs. Hughes walked Smith to give the A's a pair of baserunners, prompting Joe Girardi to yank his starter with one out in the fifth.

Shawn Kelley got a pair of groundouts to limit the damage to the one run, keeping the Yankees within striking distance.

The Yanks got on the board in the sixth on a sacrifice fly by Mark Teixeira, which cut the Oakland led to 3-1. They cut the deficit to a run in the seventh on Nix's RBI single against Straily, who was pulled with two out in the inning after the Yankees sent Lyle Overbay up as a pinch-hitter.

The A's countered with lefty Sean Doolittle, prompting Girardi to send Chris Stewart to the plate for Overbay. Doolittle fanned Stewart to hold the lead, stranding Nix in scoring position.

Phil Hughes is pulled in fifth inning, lacking command he enjoyed in previous start, and Yanks fall for second straight night in Oakland. Reuters



NEXT GAME

Thursday vs. Oakland, 7:35 p.m. Hiroki Kuroda (6-5, 2.84) vs. Jarrod Parker (5-6, 4.68). TV: YES

Mariano makes special delivery

OAKLAND — Mariano Rivera surprised a longtime A's employee before Wednesday's game, posing as a pizza delivery trainee to give Julie Vasconcellos the shock of her life. After Rivera made his surprise visit to her mailroom office, the two spent approximately 30 minutes talking before the closer walked through the A's offices and took photos with other employees before batting practice.

The visit was part of Rivera's farewell tour, which has seen him meet with people during his final stop at each ballpark this season — groups

ranging from season-ticket holders to veteran team employees. Vasconcellos, the A's office services coordinator, certainly fits the latter description, having worked for the A's since 1989.

LYLE IN THE OUTFIELD

Lyle Overbay's career in the outfield has spanned four games, so it's hard to blame him for not having the position down yet.

Overbay's inexperience showed in the second inning on Tuesday, as he pulled up on a pop fly down the right-field line, giving Robinson Cano a chance to make the play. The



only problem? Cano had been playing up the middle, giving him too much distance to cover to get the ball. The ball fell between the two players, resulting in an RBI double for Derek Norris.

"That's the only time I didn't pay attention to where he was playing," Overbay said. "If I know he's up the middle, he's got a long way to go and he doesn't have a chance at it. I've

just got to pay attention to those little things."

Overbay was out of the lineup Wednesday, although that had as much to do with the fact that Phil Hughes — a notorious fly ball pitcher — was on the mound in the spacious Coliseum.

PASS THE MIKE

Michael Pineda will take the next step in his rehab on Friday, throwing 75 pitches in a simulated game in Tampa. With the Class A Tampa team off that day for the Florida State League's All-Star break, the Yankees opted to have Pineda pitch

a simulated game rather than sending him to pitch for another of their minor-league affiliates.

"This way, we can control it," Joe Girardi said. "The other day he had one long inning and sometimes you worry about a guy that's rehabbing. This way you can build him up easier and he doesn't have to travel. Physically he's fine."

Pineda, working his way back from last year's shoulder surgery, threw 68 pitches over 4.1 innings of one-run ball in his first official rehab start last Sunday. . . . The Yankees agreed to terms with Eric Jagielo, the first of their three first-round picks in this year's draft. According to Baseball America, the third baseman out of Notre Dame signed for \$1,839,400.

CHOAKLAND!



ROUGH NIGHT: Phil Hughes, pulled in the fifth inning by Joe Girardi, Mark Teixeira (above) and the Yankees have fallen three games behind the Red Sox in the AL East after a 5-2 loss to the A's last night.
 Getty Images (2)

ON DECK
AT ATHLETICS
 TODAY — 3:35, YES, WGBS (860 AM)
 RHP Hiroki Kuroda (6-5, 2.84) vs.
 RHP Jarrod Parker (5-6, 4.69)

INSIDE THE MATCHUPS

YANKEES: A solid season for Kuroda has been slightly derailed in his past four starts. In 20 2/3 innings, the righty has given up 12 earned runs (5.23 ERA) and surrendered 28 hits.

ATHLETICS: The A's have won five of Parker's past six starts. With the 24-year-old boasting a 2.43 ERA in the span.

STAT SO?

YANKEES: The Bombers are 20-0 this season when scoring at least five runs in a game.

ATHLETICS: After last night's victory, the A's now have won 10 consecutive games at home.

Hughes victimized by HR

NY Post 6/13
 By GEORGE A. KING III

A'S 5
YANKEES 2

OAKLAND — Six years ago, Phil Hughes arrived in the big leagues and it was easy to see why the Yankees believed they had a front of the rotation arm for years to come.

He was armed with a big fastball, a filthy breaking ball and the following spring training Jason Giambi said Hughes looked like a young Roger Clemens.

Today, Hughes is quickly approaching his final three months in pinstripes because of outings such as last night's against the A's at the Coliseum. The re-

maining days could be reduced if the Yankees decide to deal the pending free agent, who they likely won't have any interest in re-signing.

For the second time in three starts Hughes didn't get out of the fifth inning on the way to a 5-2 loss that was witnessed by an announced crowd of 25,176.

The 26-year-old Hughes fell to 3-5 and has one win in the last six starts.

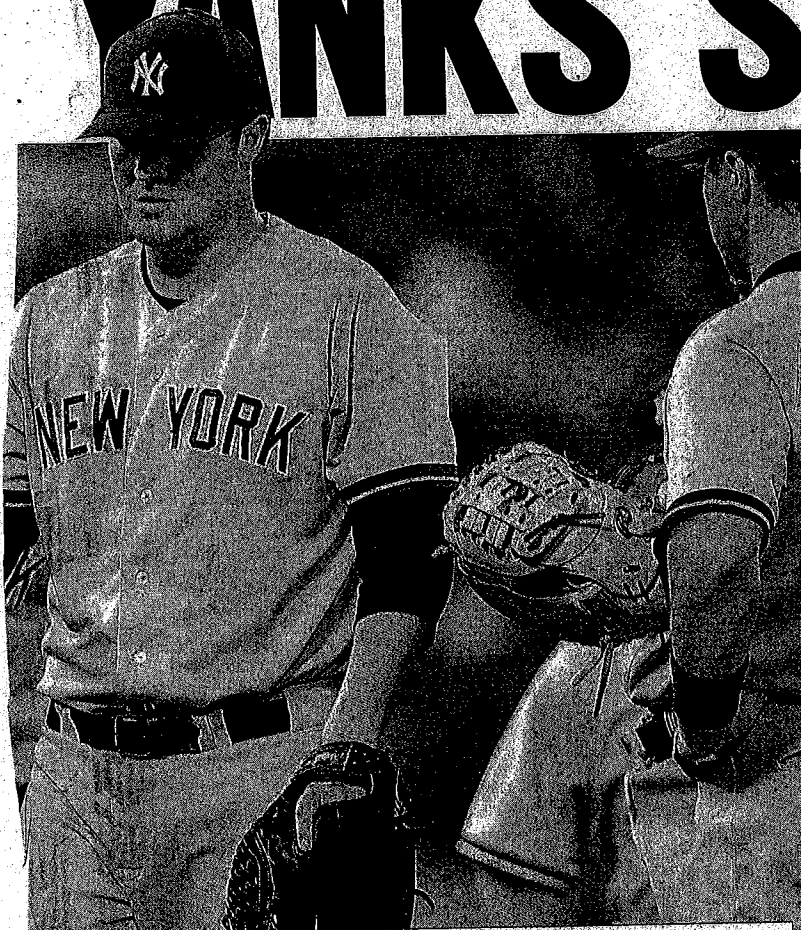
Combined with the first-place Red Sox winning, the loss dropped the Yankees

three games back in the AL East, tying their biggest deficit this season.

Brandon Moss homered twice and drove in three runs for the winners. The first homer was a two-run shot off Hughes; the second a solo blast off Joba Chamberlain, who gave up two runs in the eighth that stretched the A's lead to 5-2.

A West Coast trip that started with three wins in four games in Seattle has the Yankees turning to Hiroki Kuroda today and hoping not to get swept by the A's, who counter with right-hander Jarrod Parker. It was believed the pitch-

YANKS STIFLED



These Bombers no match for elite teams

OAKLAND — To steal from Bill Parcells, who lost the only two games he coached here at O.co Coliseum, you are what your record says you are.
The problem with these Yankees is, when they play teams with similar records, they become something less.
They get exposed. Their record worsens.
Bad Phil Hughes showed up in the Bay Area last night, so the offensively challenged Yankees suffered their second straight loss to the impressive A's, 5-2. For a team with a respectable 37-28 mark, the Yankees sure don't look very good right now.

That's probably because they have outplayed their mathematical expectation, having scored 258 runs and allowed 247, making them close to a .500 team on paper. It's also because, when matched up against good teams, they haven't fared well.

The Yankees are now 14-18 against clubs that currently have winning records and 23-10 when playing clubs that reside under .500. The Yankees should be pleased they only have today's series finale left against the A's before heading to Anaheim to take on the lousy Angels and then return home to host Don Mattingly's lousy Dodgers.

You can worry about Hughes, and it wouldn't be without justification. The erratic right-hander couldn't make it through the fifth inning, throwing 95 pitches to get just 13 outs. As is his way, he struggled to put away hitters, most memorably getting ahead of Seth Smith, 0-and-2, in the third inning and walking him nine pitches later. He now has an ERA of 4.96.

But manager Joe Girardi did well in lifting Hughes for reliever Shawn Kelley so that, by the time this game became official, the Yankees faced a manageable 3-0 deficit. At least, it's a manageable deficit for a team with a respectable offense.

That team isn't the Yankees, who rank 11th in the American League in runs scored. Against A's starting pitcher Dan Straily, the Yankees produced one hit, an Ichiro Suzuki single in the second, and no walks through those first five innings. To their credit, they cobbled together a run in the sixth

and one more in the seventh, with Mark Teixeira (sacrifice fly) and Jayson Nix (single) delivering with runners in scoring position in successive innings.

Yet that proved insufficient, as Girardi lost a seventh-inning chess match with his Oakland counterpart Bob Melvin: When Nix stole second base on the first pitch to Austin Romine, the Yankees pinch-hit Lyle Overbay on the 1-and-0 count, which prompted Melvin to turn to lefty reliever Sean Doolittle, which in turn caused Girardi to go with Chris Stewart, who struck out to end the frame. The turn of events meant that Overbay departed the game without even stepping to the plate.

It was a bold call by Girardi, and it spoke most to his desperation and lack of offensive weapons. And everything fell apart when

Joba Chamberlain allowed two insurance runs in the bottom of the eighth, putting the game out of reach for the Yankees' feeble lineup.

When Grant Balfour finished off the Yankees in the ninth inning, it dropped Girardi's guys to 11-7 in one-run games, halting a two-game winning streak in that category.

It's to their credit the Yankees have played very well against bad teams (well, besides the Mets). And if they maintained these respective winning percentages the rest of the way — .438 against winners and .697 against losers — matched against what remains on their schedule — 53 games with winners and 44 against losers? They actually would finish with 91 wins, which would at least keep them in the playoff hunt until season's end.

That's dangerous math, though. You would rather play a winning brand of baseball all around, for the sakes of both consistency and confidence.

The Yankees' actual ace Hiroki Kuroda will try to salvage this series today, attempt to close out the season series with Oakland on a positive note. The A's, loaded with young, talented players, are a strong bet to make the playoffs for a second straight year.

Will they see the Yankees there? Too early to say. Not too early to offer this, though: The Yankees sure aren't scaring any of their fellow winning teams.

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Ken Davidoff

as free-agent clock ticks

er-friendly dimensions of the Coliseum, a decrepit old park in the East Bay, would help Hughes avoid being hurt by the home run. In 65 2/3 innings Hughes had given up 12 homers.

That theory ran out of air early when Moss clubbed a two-run homer in the second to account for the game's first two runs. The A's added a run in the fifth, which was Hughes' final frame.

Right-hander Dan Straily toyed with a Yankees lineup that bleeds for every run and had produced 10 in the previous four games.

Straily (4-2) left in the seventh after giving up solo runs in the sixth and seventh.

Hughes is young enough and has a career record of 55-41, so there will be teams interested when he hits the free agent market. The early line is that Hughes lands in the NL West.

From the second start of Hughes' career in 2007 when he threw 6 1/3 hitless innings before leaving a game in Texas with a hamstring injury, the Yankees were high on him.

He rewarded them with 18 wins in 2010, 16 last year and was very effective as a

reliever for the 2009 world champions.

Yet, there have been far too many up and downs throughout. Hughes' stay with the Yankees, making \$7.15 million this year and likely to get more than that per season in a multi-year deal, the Yankees likely won't have any interest in Hughes.

Some in the organization believe Michael Pineda is Hughes' replacement, but that's putting a lot of stock in a pitcher who underwent tricky shoulder surgery last year and hasn't thrown a major league pitch since 2011.

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Yankees.com

Yankees get outslugged by A's in Oakland

Hughes falls as New York's homer drought hits five games

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com | 6/13/2013 2:48 AM ET

OAKLAND -- You can often hear chatter in the clubhouses that the ball does not seem to fly as well during night games at the O.co Coliseum. It may be true, but it only seemed to be reality for the Yankees on Wednesday.

Brandon Moss homered twice to lead the Athletics to a 5-2 win over a punchless Yankees lineup that managed just four singles and has now been unable to put the ball over the wall in its last five contests.

"That's too much. We're the Bronx Bombers," said Yankees first baseman Mark Teixeira. "But give them credit; this is not really a home run-hitting ballpark anyway. Neither is Seattle, for that matter. We just haven't gotten it done."

The heart of the order was silenced by A's starter Dan Straily and two relievers, as New York's Nos. 3-6 hitters combined to go 0-for-13 with a walk, four strikeouts and an RBI.

Ichiro Suzuki was the only player with more than one hit for the Yankees, who fell to 3-3 on their 10-game road trip.

"You need those guys to produce and pick up RBIs and big hits, and right now that's not happening," Yankees hitting coach Kevin Long said. "But we're still in a pretty good position and we've been pretty good thus far this year. We've just got to stay at it, stay positive, and this thing will turn around."

Yankees starter Phil Hughes served up the first of Moss' homers, a two-run shot in the second inning that came on a first-pitch changeup. Hughes was chased after allowing three runs and four hits in just 4 1/3 innings.

"I didn't really have good command of anything," Hughes said. "Their approach was to be patient tonight, and on a night when I didn't have good command. I was in a lot of bad counts and couldn't really find anything to put guys away with."

A propensity to serve up the long ball has been a justified topic with Hughes, but his control was more of a problem on Wednesday. The right-hander issued a season-high

five walks and acknowledged that the command issues made his body language look "terrible."

"That's something that he's going through right now," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "He needs to figure that out for us. That's important that you put good starts together and get on a roll. Right now he's struggling doing that, for whatever reason."

The A's added a fifth-inning run as Eric Sogard worked a leadoff walk, stole second base uncontested when Hughes failed to check the runner and came home as John Jaso pelted the padded wall in right-center for a run-scoring double.

Hughes walked the next batter, Seth Smith, and Girardi trudged from the dugout to retrieve the ball after 95 pitches.

"Every time I really needed to make a big pitch, I couldn't execute it. It was tough," Hughes said. "I just felt like every single time I wanted to make a good pitch, it wasn't there. That's what five walks looks like, consistently not being able to find it."

Hughes left with New York still in the ballgame, trailing 3-0, but they were struggling to piece together any kind of attack as Straily retired 11 straight through one stretch.

Teixeira drove in Brett Gardner with a sixth-inning sacrifice fly and Jayson Nix grounded a run-scoring single to left field in the seventh, driving home Kevin Youkilis.

Nix stole second to move the tying run into scoring position, and Girardi sent Lyle Overbay to the plate as a pinch-hitter. The A's countered with lefty Sean Doolittle, nudging Girardi to call back Overbay and send up Chris Stewart, who struck out on a 3-2 changeup.

"I thought Stew had a pretty good at-bat against Doolittle last night," Girardi said. "He swung the bat pretty good and I made the move. It was either [Austin] Romine against Straily or Stew against Doolittle, and I was going to take that."

Joba Chamberlain recorded two key outs in the seventh but ran into trouble in the eighth, serving up Moss' second homer -- a towering blast to center field -- and Jaso's run-scoring single to make it a three-run game.

"It was a fastball, a little bit more down than the ones I was fouling off," Moss said. "He was making tough pitches, obviously. You can look at the radar gun to see what kind of stuff he had. He throws hard and he has a really good slider."

Preston Claiborne, who had not permitted a walk in his first 14 Major League appearances spanning 19 1/3 innings, issued the ninth and final free pass by a New York pitcher in the eighth after he relieved Chamberlain.

The loss did not look good, and Long suggested one potential fix in having Robinson Cano work more against left-handed pitching in batting practice. That might help, and if not, the Yankees will work to find other ways to jump-start the lineup.

"We need more guys on base," Teixeira said. "The old walks and home runs -- [they're] not really coming. You hate to say it again, but we don't have home runs right now. It's tough to string together a whole lot of hits against good pitching."

A's Shut Down Yankees Again

June 13, 2013, 1:46 a.m. ET

By DANIEL BARBARISI

OAKLAND, Calif.—There are some pitchers who, because they are prone to mistakes, because they throw a rising fastball, or because they lack effective breaking balls, are more likely than others to allow home runs.

Then there is the Yankees' Phil Hughes, who struggles with all of those issues. Hughes placed second in all of baseball in home runs allowed in 2012 with 35, and having surrendered 13 this year, he is working on a similar pace. Some of the time, he can survive those home runs. Other times, they are too much for his team to bear.

Wednesday night fell into the "other" category. Facing the Oakland Athletics, Hughes gave up a two-run shot to the A's Brandon Moss, part of a two-homer night for Moss, as the Yankees fell to Oakland 5-2.

Hughes didn't make it out of the fifth inning, walking five A's and allowing three runs in 4 1/3 innings before giving way to the Yankee bullpen.

A three-run deficit isn't insurmountable, but for the second straight night, Hughes's teammates in the Yankee lineup were mystified by the opposing starter: Tuesday night, it was the veteran Bartolo Colon; Wednesday night, the unheralded Dan Straily.

Straily held the Yankees to two runs in 6 2/3 innings, leaving with the game still tight—if the Yankee relievers could hold the line.

Instead, the Yankee bullpen failed live up to its shutdown billing. Joba Chamberlain allowed two insurance runs, one on Moss's second homer of the night, and Preston Claiborne issued the first walk of his 15-game major league career, as Athletics coasted to their second straight win over the Yankees.



Phil Hughes doesn't last in 5-2 Yankees loss to Oakland

Andy McCullough/The Star-Ledger By Andy McCullough/The Star-Ledger

on June 13, 2013 at 2:07 AM, updated June 13, 2013 at 2:43 AM

OAKLAND – Phil Hughes slipped into a Yankees hoodie to ward off the approaching Bay Area chill. He parked himself on the bench and sipped from a plastic bottle of Aquafina. His night was over, far earlier than the Yankees had hoped, midway through the fifth inning of a 5-2 loss to the Athletics.

Hughes (3-5, 4.89 ERA) displayed mediocre form for a team that can ill afford many lapses from its starting rotation. Even in these friendly confines, Hughes looked shaky. He walked a season-high five batters, gave up a trio of runs and departed with one out in the fifth. He felt like he was pitching without “good command.”

“It’s a bad feeling,” Hughes said. “You just try to make something happen, find something that’s going to work. I didn’t have good command of my slider, changeup, anything.”

He added, “Every time I felt like I needed to make a pitch, it just wasn’t there. That’s what five walks looks like. Just consistently not being able to find it.”

The Yankees’ bats have gone cold here at O.co Coliseum, a barn famous for favoring its pitchers. The theoretical heart of their order – Robinson Cano, Mark Teixeira, Travis Hafner, Vernon Wells and Kevin Youkilis – went 1-for-17 with one RBI and one walk.

"We need more guys on base," Teixeira said. "The old walks and home runs not really coming. I hate to say it again, but we don't have home runs right now."

The Yankees last hit a home run on June 6.

"That's too much," he said. "We're the Bronx Bombers."

By the time of Hughes' departure, A's starter Dan Straily had hypnotized the Yankees' batters. Ichiro Suzuki managed a single in the second inning. A Yankee did not reach base again until the sixth. Straily retired 11 in a row. In the fourth and fifth innings, the baseball did not leave the infield.

"Right now, we're going through a bit of hard time," manager Joe Girardi said. "These guys will bounce back."

Brett Gardner broke the spell with a sixth-inning walk. He took third on a Robinson Cano single and scored on a flyball from Mark Teixeira. The Yankees picked up their second run an inning later on an RBI single from Jayson Nix.

But A's first baseman Brandon Moss swatted his second homer of the game in the eighth, a solo shot off Joba Chamberlain. Oakland scored another run off Chamberlain before bouncing him from the mound.

Hiroki Kuroda will start on Thursday afternoon here, looking to stave off a sweep. The Yankees (37-28) have now lost four of their five games against Oakland this season.

The Athletics taxed Hughes for a pair of runs in the second inning. Josh Reddick cracked a leadoff single. Then Hughes tried a first-pitch changeup to Moss.

Off Moss' bat, the baseball rose into the patch of sun shining on the bleachers in right-center field. Ichiro Suzuki backpedaled to the warning track. There he

idled, looking as if he was camped beneath a pop fly soon to fall. Then he turned, an admission of the outcome, watching as the ball landed in the seats.

Hughes continued to tussle in the third. He walked the first two batters he faced. The second at-bat must have been maddening. Hughes dropped a curveball in for a strike to outfielder Seth Smith, and followed up with a 91-mph fastball in the zone. Nine pitches later – four of them foul balls – Smith ambled to first base.

Yet Hughes remained resourceful. Jed Lowrie tapped a grounder toward Robinson Cano, who completed a double play. With a runner at third, Hughes gave up a towering drive to third baseman Josh Donaldson. Brett Gardner retreated to the deepest part of the part in center. He caught the ball at the base of the wall.

When Hughes struggles, manager Joe Girardi often uses a basic refrain. On those nights, Hughes cannot utilize his offspeed pitches with effectiveness. That demon returned in the fifth inning. After a leadoff walk to second baseman Eric Sogard, Hughes spotted a curveball over the plate. Catcher Josh Jaso dipped down to power it off the wall in right-center for an RBI double.

"I thought he was trying to mix his pitches," Girardi said. "He just couldn't throw them for strikes."

Hughes walked the next batter he faced. It was his fifth of the game, and his final act of the night.

"Even when I'm off, or things like that, I can at least kind of throw strikes," Hughes said. "That's what I take pride in. And tonight, I wasn't able to throw strikes. That was the especially frustrating part."

So bad, even Preston Claiborne walked a guy

Posted By [Chad Jennings](#) On June 13, 2013 @ 1:14 am In [Misc](#) | [29 Comments](#)

As you might suspect, four singles was not enough offense for the Yankees to win tonight. All things considered — how little their offense produced, how rocky their starting pitcher was — the Yankees kept it close for a while, but close didn't mean much in a 5-2 loss to the A's. Having built some momentum just last week, the Yankees are now a loss away from being swept. Not surprisingly, one hit in the first five innings did nothing to put the Yankees on the board. One hit in the sixth did help produce a run (with help from a walk and a sac fly), and one hit in the seventh led to another run (with a hit by pitch and a wild pitch). Problem was, that was the extent of the Yankees offense after a two-out walk and single went nowhere in the ninth. Starter Phil Hughes had a Phil Hughes start. There were moments when he made some fine pitches, got some strikeouts and got out of some trouble. There were other moments when he walked too many batters and gave up a two-run homer. For the fifth time this season — two of which were his first two starts of the year — Hughes failed to pitch out of the fifth inning. He allowed three runs with five walks through 4.1 innings. Two of those runs came on the first of two homers by Brandon Moss. The second Moss homer came as part of a two-run eighth inning against Joba Chamberlain. Oh, and Preston Claiborne walked a batter for the first time in his big league career. It was that kind of night.

Postgame notes: "We just haven't gotten it done"

Posted By [Chad Jennings](#) On June 13, 2013 @ 2:35 am In [Misc](#) | [25 Comments](#)

The heart of the Yankees order — Nos. 2 through 5 — combined to hit 1-for-17 tonight. They had a sacrifice fly, a walk and four strikeouts.

"You hate to say it again, but we don't have home runs right now," Mark Teixeira said. "It's tough to string together a whole lot of hits against good pitching — we faced some pretty good pitching the last two nights. Bartolo was really good last night, and their guy pitched really well tonight. Sometimes you need to pop a couple home runs off those guys, and we haven't been able to do that. ... We just haven't gotten it done."

This isn't a one-night phenomenon. Robinson Cano's batting average is down to .277 following a bad two-week stretch. The rest of the Yankees supposed-to-be run producers are hitting .237 or below, and the team has gone five games without a home run, matching their longest homerless streak since 2000.

With little need for an introduction, here's hitting coach Kevin Long talking about...

Robinson Cano: "I think Robbie is all right. We're going to do some more left-handed stuff with him. If you look at his numbers against righties, he's killing them. I think where his production goes down is facing lefties, and we're going to move him to my group in batting practice (*Long pitches left-handed*) and see if that helps out a little bit. That's one of the solutions we have come up with."

Mark Teixeira: "Yesterday he swung the bat good. Today I thought he hit some balls good. He's come up with some big hits at some big times. He's just getting accustomed to Major League pitching, and it's going to take him a little bit of time. The sooner the better, but you've got to be somewhat patient with him."

Travis Hafner: "Haf got into some bad habits when his shoulder was hurt. We felt pretty good about his swing as of late. We didn't get the results today. Yesterday he smashed two balls; we didn't get anything for that. Again, we'll just stay at it, stay the course and I think at the end of the day these guys will come through."

Vernon Wells: "Vernon is coming around a few balls here and there. He's had a couple of good games and then kind of (not so good). Not really expanding too much. Getting some pitches to the outer part of the plate where maybe in the beginning of the year he was going the other way a little bit more."

Kevin Youkilis: "Youkilis is starting to come around. You can see it. You can see the life in his body, his bat is starting to come through the zone. Certainly if (Youkilis and Teixeira) can get going and get on track, that'll help us out a great deal."

- Phil Hughes has lacked consistency in almost every way this season, but until tonight he had not walked a ton of guys. He had five walks tonight, having never walked more than two in a game this season. "Every time I really need to make a big pitch, I couldn't execute it," he said. "It was tough. I just felt like every single time I wanted to make a good pitch it wasn't there. That's what five walks looks like; consistently not being able to find it."

- After the two-run homer, Hughes retired three straight, pitched around back-to-back walks, then struck out two in a 1-2-3 fourth. But his pitch count was extremely high, and there were two more walks in the fifth. Eventually the trouble just caught up to him. "I felt like my body language was terrible tonight," he said. "I was trying to control myself, but after the fourth walk, I was almost trying to take a deep breath, see if I could slow myself down, find a way to battle through it. It was just one of those nights when every time I wanted to make a pitch, it just wasn't there."

- On the two-run homer by Brandon Moss: "Just a first-pitch changeup that was out over the plate," Hughes said. "We talked about changeups being a good option to him, but he didn't see my fastball at all tonight up to that point, so it was just a mistake over the plate."

- Joe Girardi on Hughes: "I thought he struggled with some of his offspeed today. I thought he was able to throw some early curveballs for strikes but some of his other pitches he struggled a little bit. He got in some long counts. I thought he was trying to mix his pitches, but he just wasn't able to throw strikes. ... And I think (five walks) is a product that he wasn't able to throw his offspeed for strikes tonight, in a sense. He tried to mix, and he never really got it going."

- Despite Hughes and the offense, the Yankees trailed just 3-0 after five innings and cut the lead to 3-2 before Joba Chamberlain gave up two more runs in the eighth. "We had a chance," Girardi said. "We got it to 3-2 and we

had a runner on second with two outs and you hope you can tie the score up. Joba does a good job I think it was the bottom of the seventh getting two big strikeouts (*actually one and a ground ball*). But in the eighth, things got away from him a little bit."

- Girardi explaining the move in the seventh to initially pinch hit Lyle Overbay and then Chris Stewart: "Well, once we got Nixy to second (on a stolen base), I'm going to make the move. I know he's going to bring in Doolittle for Overbay, so at that point, unless Nixy gets to second, I'm not going to make the move. Once he gets to second, I thought Stew had a pretty good at-bat against Doolittle last night. He swung the bat pretty good and I made the move. It was either Romine against Straily or Stew against Doolittle, and I was going to take that."
- Long on whether guys are pressing: "No. I think the clubhouse is loose. We just won three out of four in Seattle. We lost two games to a team that I believe is in first place and playing good baseball. My job is to make sure that we continue to get our work in, continue to work at having good at-bats, quality at-bats. At the end of the day, if there's something that we need to address, we do that."
- According to Josh Norris, catching prospect J.R. Murphy has been promoted ^[5] from Trenton to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. The Yankees have been happy with his defensive improvement this season. They've always liked the bat.
- Girardi actually indicated he might do something different with the lineup tomorrow, using the quick turnaround as an easy excuse to make a change. Asked whether he might shake things up, Girardi said: "Tomorrow's a day game after a night game. We'll see what we do."
- Final word goes to Teixeira: "Yeah, we fought back. We'd like to not have to fight back every game. Getting the lead is nice for our pitchers. I think you saw, with our nice little streak against Cleveland and Seattle, we were ahead a lot of those games. It gives our pitcher a chance to settle down and pitch his game."

ESPN.com

Brandon Moss homers twice to back Dan Straily as A's top Yankees

By The Associated Press
June 13, 2013

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Sure, Brandon Moss would like to have more than five hits in his past 40 at-bats. It's not so bad, though, considering all five have cleared the fences.

Moss hit a two-run homer and a solo shot for his third career two-homer game, and the Oakland Athletics beat the New York Yankees 5-2 on Wednesday night to win their 10th straight home game.

Moss hit his 10th homer of the season in the second inning and 11th with a solo drive in the eighth. He also connected twice April 29 against the Angels. Of his five hits over 40 at-bats in his past 19 games, all are home runs.

"Last year in Triple-A, I did it at exactly this time. I had three weeks straight where the only hits I had were home runs," Moss said. "I'll take that. It's not where I want to be, obviously. I'd much rather be getting hits also. I said it a long time ago, I've done it before where I've sacrificed power for hits. It still didn't turn out well. ... If you're able to contribute and drive in runs when you do connect, it's definitely better than taking your seat."

Moss' power stroke helped Dan Straily (4-2) win his third consecutive decision.

John Jaso added an RBI double and a run-scoring single for Oakland. The A's (40-27) won for the 20th time in 25 games and are off to their best start since 1990.

Brett Gardner drew a one-out walk in the sixth to end a stretch of 11 straight Yankees retired by Straily. Robinson Cano singled, and Mark Teixeira hit a sacrifice fly.

New York missed a scoring chance during an odd sequence in the seventh.

Jayson Nix hit a two-out RBI single and stole second. With Nix as the potential tying run, Lyle Overbay came out to pinch hit with a 1-0 count already against Austin Romine. A's manager Bob Melvin then made his own switch, to reliever Sean Doolittle.

Chris Stewart came on to pinch hit for Overbay, who never reached the batter's box but was credited for appearing in the game. Stewart struck out on a changeup to end the inning.

"I've never done that before. That was weird," Doolittle said. "I was like, 'What's going to happen here?' ... I didn't really know what was going on. I've never, in my short time as a pitcher, come in in the middle of a count like that."

Doolittle then pitched a perfect eighth before Grant Balfour finished for his 17th save of the season and 35th in a row dating to April 29, 2012. He retired Nix on a broken-bat comebacker to end it with runners on first and second.

Straily, coming off a pair of no-decisions, allowed two or fewer runs for the fourth time in five outings. He gave up two runs and three hits in 6 2/3 innings.

Oakland owns its longest unbeaten streak at home since another 10-game run from Aug. 11 to Sept. 1, 2006. The A's secured their first season series victory against the Yankees since going 4-2 in 2007.

Moss, now batting .228, sent the first pitch he saw from Phil Hughes (3-5) over the right-field scoreboard in the second following Josh Reddick's leadoff single.

"It was just a matter of time," Melvin said of Moss finding a groove. "He was such an instrumental part last year."

After a 1-2-3 fourth inning, Hughes issued a leadoff walk to Eric Sogard in the fifth. Jaso's double one out later and another walk to Seth Smith ended the right-hander's night.

Hughes walked a season-high five and lost for the third time in four decisions. He allowed three runs on four hits and struck out three in 4 1/3 innings. He hadn't walked more than two batters all season.

The Yankees haven't hit a home run in a season-high five straight games -- the club's longest drought since also going five games from May 17 to 21, 2006.

"It's part of the game. You have to fight your way out of it," manager Joe Girardi said. "We know the guys are capable."

Game notes

Yankees RHP Michael Pineda, working his way back from shoulder surgery 14 months ago, threw a 75-pitch bullpen session. He had been set to pitch in a minor league game this weekend but instead will throw a simulated game Friday at the team's complex in Tampa, Fla. "This way we can control it," Girardi said. "The other day he had one long inning. If Tampa would have been at home, he would have pitched in that game." ... A's CF Coco Crisp is nursing a bruised heel -- which happened sometime after his first-inning home run Tuesday and before his next at-bat -- and sat out after hitting home runs the previous two games. "He felt it when he got up this morning," Melvin said. "He felt better when he got to the park and got some treatment. We won't take any chances with him but if he comes in tomorrow and feels like he's close to 100 percent, there's the potential for him to play." ... A's LF Yoenis Cespedes also was sidelined because of tightness in his left hamstring that forced him to leave after the second inning Tuesday. ... RHP Jarrod Parker (5-6) pitches the series finale for the A's on Thursday afternoon opposite Hiroki Kuroda (6-5). ... Gardner failed to get a hit for just the third time in 19 games since May 24.

ESPN.com

Thursday, June 13, 2013

Rapid Reaction: Athletics 5, Yankees 2

By Wallace Matthews

OAKLAND -- Lots to be concerned with Wednesday night -- [Phil Hughes](#)' ineffectiveness, [Joba Chamberlain](#)'s ineffectiveness, [David Robertson](#)'s unexplained absence (so far) -- but maybe nothing more troubling than this: Over their past five games, the Yankees have scored a total of 12 runs. Somehow, they've managed to win two of them, but not Wednesday night, as the A's slugged their way to a 5-2 triumph.

What it means: That after a triumphant visit to Seattle, the Yankees need a win in tomorrow's series finale to avoid going "Oh-for-Oakland."

Branded: A's first baseman [Brandon Moss](#) crushed the Yankees, hitting a two-run bomb off [Phil Hughes](#) in the second inning and an even more impressive shot off the back wall well beyond the center-field wall off Joba Chamberlain in the eighth.

Strafed: A's starter [Dan Straily](#), in his second career start against the Yankees, held them to two runs on just three hits in 6 2/3 innings.

Had his Phil: Yankees manager Joe Girardi saw enough of Hughes after he walked [Seth Smith](#) with one out in the fifth after having just given up an RBI double off the wall to [John Jaso](#). Too many walks and deep counts had Hughes up to 95 pitches, and his penchant for allowing the long ball added up to a short night for Hughes, who failed to get out of the fifth inning for the second time in his past three starts.

Nice try: And the Oscar for Best Actor in an Outfield Role goes to [Ichiro Suzuki](#), who faked out everyone in the ballpark into thinking he would catch Moss' drive to right field in the second. Everyone that is with the exception of Moss, who knew he had hit the ball into the seats. But Ichiro almost got Moss to pass [Josh Reddick](#), who fell for the act and was headed back to first, on the base paths. But not quite. The shot gave Oakland a 2-0 lead.

Ribbie Machine: [Mark Teixeira](#)'s sixth-inning line out to right scored [Brett Gardner](#) from third for his 12th RBI in the 12 games since he came off the disabled list. Tex is batting just .186 but strange as it sounds, has had his share of productive ABs.

Watch and learn: Girardi's decision not to start [Lyle Overbay](#) in right field Wednesday night was clearly the correct call, especially when Ichiro was called on to make two sliding catches, one of which bailed out Hughes in the fifth and another that bailed out [Shawn Kelley](#) in the sixth. With Overbay out there, A's would have probably scored at least two more runs.

Binders gone wild: Girardi used three players on one at-bat in the seventh, allowing [Austin Romine](#) to see one pitch from Straily, then lifting him in the middle of the at-bat for Lyle Overbay, at which point Bob Melvin removed Straily in favor of LHP [Sean Doolittle](#). So of course, Girardi then replaced Overbay with [Chris Stewart](#), who struck out to end the inning.

Close call: The Yankees appeared to get the benefit of a tough call at first when umpire CB Bucknor called Josh Reddick out on a bang-bang 3-1 play, ending the seventh with two A's on base. Replays showed Reddick and Joba Chamberlain arrived at the bag virtually simultaneously.

Null and void: The 3-thru-6 hitters in the Yankees lineup -- Teixeira, [Travis Hafner](#), [Vernon Wells](#) and [Kevin Youkilis](#) -- went 0-for-13 with an RBI (Tex sacrifice fly), a hit batsman and a walk (both to Youkilis).

Bad Joba: In addition to Moss' homer, Chamberlain allowed two more hits, including an RBI single by John Jaso, to give the A's a 5-2 lead and some breathing room heading into the ninth.

Had to happen: When [Preston Claiborne](#), on in relief of Joba, walked Seth Smith in the eighth, it was his first walk of the season in 19 1/3 innings.

Where's D-Rob? David Robertson, the "Eighth-Inning Guy," was not brought in to pitch the eighth with the Yanks trailing by a run. Instead, Girardi went to Joba, and the Yanks came out trailing by three runs.

What's next: [Hiroki Kuroda](#) (6-5, 2.84) gets the ball for Thursday afternoon's series finale, facing RHP [Jarrod Parker](#) (5-6, 4.68), first pitch at 3:35 p.m.

ESPN.com

Thursday, June 13, 2013

Postgame notes: D-Rob OK?

By Wallace Matthews

OAKLAND -- There were a lot of reasons why the Yankees lost tonight, the two most important being the ineffectiveness of [Phil Hughes](#) and the ineptitude of the heart of their batting order, in which the 3-through-6 hitters went 0-for-13.

But the game certainly got out of hand in the eighth inning, when, with the Yankees trying to keep the game close, Joe Girardi stuck with [Joba Chamberlain](#), who after getting two outs in the seventh imploded the eighth, allowing a colossal home run by [Brandon Moss](#) and an RBI single by [John Jaso](#) to put the game out of reach.

Which led to a natural postgame question: Where was [David Robertson](#), the Yankees designated "Eighth-Inning Guy," in the crucial eighth inning? Especially since D-Rob had not pitched since Sunday in Seattle?

Here's what Joe Girardi had to say: "He was available but we're down 3-2 and I like what Joba did in the bottom of the seventh, so I'm not going to use him there."

Afterward, I went up to Girardi privately and told him what I had seen before the game, which was Robertson lying on the trainer's table having a laser treatment applied to his right elbow by Steve Donohue. "Oh, he's fine," Girardi aid. "Guys get treatment all the time."

I asked Robertson about it, too, and he, too, said he was fine, and that the treatment was to relieve some muscle soreness caused by an intense weight-lifting workout on the day off. He did admit, however, that he was surprised not to get the call after Joba gave up the HR to Moss, his second of the game, which made the score 4-2 Oakland.

Maybe he is fine and this was just another unique decision by the manager. But it is certainly a situation that bears watching.

Also:

-- The heart of the Yankees order, [Mark Teixeira](#), [Travis Hafner](#), [Vernon Wells](#) and [Kevin Youkilis](#) went hitless, although Teixeira drove in a run with sacrifice fly and Youkilis got on base twice via a walk and a hit-by-pitch. And this was the fifth straight game in which the Yankees have failed to hit a home run, which had not happened since 2000.

Said hitting coach Kevin Long: "We need more guys on base. The old walks and home runs are not really coming. You hate to say it again, but we don't have home runs right now. It's tough to

string together a whole lot of hits against good pitching. Sometimes you need to pop a couple home runs off those guys, and we haven't been able to do that."

-- Girardi's decision to play gamesmanship with A's manager Bob Melvin in the seventh inning, sending [Lyle Overbay](#) up to hit for [Austin Romine](#) after [Jayson Nix](#) stole second on [Dan Straily](#)'s first pitch, and then pulling Overbay for [Chris Stewart](#) when Melvin brought in lefty [Sean Doolittle](#), backfired twice when Stewart struck out and Overbay was not available to hit for Nix against closer [Grant Balfour](#), a righty, in the ninth inning.

But Joe Girardi said the ultimate matchup of Stewart versus Doolittle was the one he really wanted.

"I thought Stew had a pretty good at-bat against Doolittle last night," Girardi said. "He swung the bat pretty good and I made the move."

Stewart struck out against Doolittle on Tuesday and again last night. He is now 0-for-3 lifetime against Doolittle with two strikeouts.

Yankees.com

A's looking to sweep Yankees behind Parker

Kuroda hopes to snap New York's six-game Oakland skid

By AJ Cassavell / MLB.com | 6/13/2013 2:17 AM ET

One way or another, it seems like every time the Yankees and A's meet at O.co Coliseum these days, the brooms come out.

In each of the past four series between the two clubs in Oakland, the victor has earned a sweep. The Yankees had swept three consecutive series there before Oakland won four straight games last July, and now the A's are looking for another sweep after taking first two games of a three-game set this week.

Jarrod Parker (5-6, 4.68 ERA) gets the ball for Oakland, looking to build on his recent hot stretch. In his past six starts, Parker has posted a 2.43 ERA -- including a victory over the White Sox in which he went seven frames and allowed two earned runs on Friday.

Fellow right-hander Hiroki Kuroda will start for the Yankees, and he is headed in the opposite direction. Despite a 2.84 ERA on the season, Kuroda has three losses and a no-decision in his past four outings, including a loss to the Mariners on Friday.

According to Kuroda, who surrendered four runs in the fourth inning and nothing else, his problem in that frame was simple: "I got too careful and pitched around too much," Kuroda said.

The Yankees are in the midst of a tough 10-game West Coast trip during which they've gone 3-3.

Unless the Yankees and A's meet in the postseason -- a distinct possibility given their starts to the season -- Thursday marks the final game for legendary Yankees closer Mariano Rivera in Oakland, where he notched his first career victory in 1995. In 31 regular-season appearances there, Rivera has posted a 1.66 ERA.

Rivera also recorded a pair of saves in Oakland in win-or-go-home American League Division Series games. In 2000 he closed a nail-bating 7-5 Yankees victory in Game 5, and in '01 he put the lid on a 1-0 Game 3 victory known best for Derek Jeter's flip hope to nail Jason Giambi.

Yankees: Pineda's outing shifted

Michael Pineda will throw a simulated game Friday rather than pitching for a Minor League affiliate because the Yankees prefer that the 24-year-old throw under more controlled conditions.

"The other day he had one long inning, and sometimes you worry about a guy that's rehabbing," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "This way you can build him up easier. He doesn't have to travel. Physically he's fine. Tuesday he threw his bullpen, and he's ready to go."

The club would like Pineda to throw 75 pitches in the sim game, and hopes to have him up to full strength sometime soon after the All-Star break.

- The Yankees have lost six straight games at the Coliseum.

A's: Crisp, Cespedes nursing injuries

The A's are 27-8 when Coco Crisp and Yoenis Cespedes are both in the starting lineup, and they're just 13-19 without the pair. Both sat Wednesday because of injuries.

"We always feel confident with whomever we run out there," manager Bob Melvin said. "Obviously the results would suggest that we do very well when they're both in there."

Cespedes tweaked his left hamstring in Tuesday's series-opening victory and Crisp is nursing an apparent heel injury.

- The A's have won 20 of their last 25 games.

Worth noting

- A's outfielder Seth Smith is hitting .375 with a .464 on-base percentage in 28 career plate appearances against Kuroda. But he doesn't have a home run. In fact, not a single member of the A's active roster has gone yard against the Yanks right-hander.

- The A's are 10-3 this season in games decided in the final at-bat.

- In 10 lifetime at-bats against Parker, Yankees outfielder Ichiro Suzuki has recorded four hits.

6/12/2013 10:51 P.M. ET

Mo surprises A's employee with pregame pizza

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Mariano Rivera's "Mo-ment of Thanks" tour has taken place behind the scenes at several ballparks around the Majors this season, bringing visits to areas that the Yankees closer normally doesn't see.

Rivera discovered on Wednesday that gaining access to the less-traveled areas of a ballpark is much easier while carrying a piping-hot pizza pie.

The retiring hurler surprised long-time Athletics employee Julie Vasconcellos before Wednesday's game at the O.co Coliseum, delivering an early dinner to her mail-room office. They spent about 30 minutes together before Rivera took the field for batting practice with his teammates.

"This is my way to say thank you, thank you for what you do," Rivera told Vasconcellos, according to The Associated Press. "Twenty-five years, Julie, that's great! You're special, Julie, that's what it is. People here love you."

Rivera has said that he wants to take the opportunity to thank diehard fans and long-time club employees at each of the Yankees' road stops this season.

Vasconcellos, the A's office services coordinator, has worked for the club since 1989 and is involved in aspects of the organization ranging from the front office to the mail needs of the home and visiting clubhouses.

"Oh, my heart's going to town, oh my God," Vasconcellos told the AP. "I'm shaking. ... Oh, this is too funny, thank you."

CBSNewYork.com

'Pizza Man' Mariano Rivera Surprises A's Employee With Pregame Delivery

Yankees Closer Orders Up Something Special In Oakland

June 13, 2013 7:19 AM

OAKLAND, Calif. (CBSNewYork/AP) – Posing as a pizza delivery man, New York Yankees closer Mariano Rivera surprised longtime Athletics employee Julie Vasconcellos by visiting her in the mail room where she has worked going on 25 years.

Rivera carried in a pizza box Wednesday night and brought Vasconcellos to tears as he thanked her for 2 1/2 decades of hard work behind the scenes.

"This is my way to say thank you, thank you for what you do," Rivera told Vasconcellos, who declined to give her age other than "old." "Twenty-five years, Julie, that's great! You're special, Julie, that's what it is. People here love you."

Rivera signed a ball for Vasconcellos, gave her several hugs and posed for photos – then he stuck around to chat for another 10 minutes or so.

"Oh, my heart's going to town, oh my God," said Vasconcellos, who had to sit down at one point. "I'm shaking. ... Oh, this is too funny, thank you."

Rivera asked if she was OK, to which she responded, "I'm just shocked. I'm never going to forget your face again."

He chuckled at that one.

The 43-year-old Rivera said this is the most creative display of appreciation yet during his farewell tour before he heads into retirement after his 19th major league season.

He's doing similar things in each city, getting a thrill in each stop by making one person's day. It's been dubbed the "Mo-ment of Thanks."

"Oh, I love it, yes. I'm enjoying every minute," Rivera said. "They all have their own personality. I decided before spring training that I wanted to do something different and make sure I said thanks to the fans – not just the regular fans, but also those behind the scenes, like Julie, who has been here (more than) 20 years. That's wonderful."

Rivera, in his gray Yankees uniform before Wednesday night's game against the A's, entered the room where Vasconcellos works as A's personnel told her she had a new trainee on her hands.

"Whew, this is really something," Vasconcellos said. "In grammar school, we could only get the Yankees on our PA system. I grew up here, but there was no Oakland team yet."

These two, strangers turned friends, do share one thing in common: pending retirement.

"I love my job, but I hope to retire soon," Vasconcellos said.

"I'm done, Julie," Rivera replied with a smile.

Sim. game not setback for Pineda

By GEORGE A. KING III

OAKLAND — The decision to have Michael Pineda throw a simulated game tomorrow in Tampa instead of in a real minor league game had nothing to do with an injury.

"If Tampa [Single-A] was home he would have pitched for Tampa," Joe Girardi said of the right-hander who is coming back from shoulder surgery and hasn't pitched in the big leagues since 2011. "It's one start and probably the last [simulated game]."

YANKEES NOTES

According to pitching coach Larry Rothschild, sending Pineda to Charleston (Single-A) for a second minor league start was an option that wasn't taken.

"We went back and forth about Charleston, instead we decided to have him throw five or six innings," Rothschild said.

"We are trying to build him up like we did with [Andy] Pettitte and CC [Sabathia] in spring training. At this point it doesn't hurt to have a pitching coach right there."

Rothschild said Pineda hasn't suffered a setback and is "doing great."

► After giving up 22 home runs last year in 200 innings, **CC Sabathia** has surrendered 14 homers in 95 frames this year.

"Will he give up more homers than last year? He probably will," Girardi said. "I think he will throw the ball good Sunday [against the Angels]. I have seen it too many times. We don't make too much out of one game."

► Scranton/Wilkes-Barre outfielder **Brennan Boesch** was placed on the 7-day Triple-A disabled list with a problem in the left shoulder that isn't considered serious.

► Less than one week after the draft, the Yankees signed their first pick, **Eric Jagielo**, to a \$1,839,400 bonus yesterday.

Jagiello, the 26th pick in the draft, is a 6-foot-3, 215-pound, left-handed hitting third baseman who will likely start his professional career with short-season Single-A Staten Island (NY-Penn. League).

The Yankees also signed shortstops **Tyler Wade** and **Johnny Murphy** and pitcher **David Palladino**.

YANKS NOTEBOOK

Pineda rehab gets a tweak

By ERIK BOLAND
erik.boland@newsday.com

OAKLAND, Calif. — Michael Pineda, with one rehab start under his belt, will start again tomorrow. He won't pitch in a game. The right-hander, who is recovering from shoulder surgery, instead will throw about 75 pitches in a simulated game.

That does not mean, however, that the righthander suffered a setback. Rather, it's the combination of two factors — the first being the High-A Tampa Yankees, for whom Pineda started Sunday, are off. Second, the simulated game gives the Yankees a better chance to control the circumstances.

Getting the feel for in-game situations, at this point of rehab, isn't the most important thing. Still, if the Tampa Yankees had a game tomorrow, Pineda would be pitching for them. "Physically he's fine," Girardi said. "He's ready to go."

► Cano showing signs

Robinson Cano entered Tuesday in a 3-for-28 skid but went 2-for-3 with a walk in the Yankees' 6-4 loss. "It's good to see but I don't ever really worry too much about Robbie," Girardi said. "Hopefully it will get him going because we know how . . . he can carry a team."

► Draft picks sign

The Yankees agreed to terms with their first pick from last week's draft, 3B Eric Jagielo, signing him for \$1,839,400, the assigned value of the pick (26th overall) in baseball's slotting system. The Yankees also agreed to terms with SS Tyler Wade (fourth round), RHP David Palladino (fifth), SS John Murphy (sixth), RHP Philip Walby (12th), RHP Caleb Coshow (13th), LHP Caleb Smith (14th), CF Jordan Barnes (15th), 2B Derek Toadvine (22nd), RHP Sam Agnew-Wieland (24th), C Trent Garrison (28th), SS Kevin Cornelius (31) and 2B Hector Crespo (34th).

Newsday 6/13

6/12/2013 10:51 P.M. ET

Pineda's next outing shifts to simulated game

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The Yankees have made a change of plans with rehabbing right-hander Michael Pineda, who will make his next appearance on Friday in a simulated game rather than pitching for a Minor League affiliate.

A change was made because the Yankees would prefer to have Pineda pitch under controlled conditions, according to manager Joe Girardi, who said that there are no injury concerns with the 24-year-old.

"This way, we can control it," Girardi said. "The other day he had one long inning and sometimes you worry about a guy that's rehabbing. This way you can build him up easier; he doesn't have to travel. Physically he's fine. Tuesday he threw his bullpen and he's ready to go."

Pineda allowed an unearned run over 4 2/3 innings on Sunday for Class A Tampa at Lakeland, but the Tampa Yankees are off on Friday for the Florida State League All-Star break.

"It's one start, it's not a big deal," Girardi said. "It will probably be the only simulated game he throws. It just works out better."

The Yankees expect Pineda to throw 75 pitches in his simulated game and continue to project that he should be a choice for the big league roster sometime in July, though general manager Brian Cashman has left open the possibility that Pineda could be sent to start at Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre when his rehab assignment is complete.

Bombers bits

- Girardi said that he gave no further thought to CC Sabathia's rough effort on Tuesday night against the A's, and expects that Sabathia will be better on Sunday against the Angels.

Girardi added that even though Sabathia has served up 14 home runs this season, compared to 22 in all of 2012, he believes the left-hander can correct the problem moving forward.

"We're aware of it," Girardi said. "We understand the fastball velocity is not what it used to be, but my thought is, he can still really pitch at a high level. Will he give up more home runs this year than last year? Probably. It would be great if he didn't."

Sabathia allowed six runs on eight hits in six innings in a 6-4 loss in Oakland.

- On this date in 2008, Hideki Matsui became the first Yankee to hit a grand slam on his birthday, in a 4-1 win at Oakland.



Michael Pineda to make next rehab start for Yankees in simulated game

Andy McCullough/The Star-Ledger By Andy McCullough/The Star-Ledger

on June 12, 2013 at 7:21 PM, updated June 12, 2013 at 7:55 PM

OAKLAND – Michael Pineda will start in a simulated game on Friday at the team's complex in Tampa, Fla. in his second appearance since beginning a 30-day rehab assignment on Sunday.

The setting was curious. Players start rehab assignments once they've graduated from the simulated-game phase. The Yankees stressed Pineda was not experiencing any physical issues. He completed his bullpen on Tuesday. His pitch count is expected to grow to 75 during this outing. He threw 68 in 4 1/3 innings on Sunday with Class-A Tampa, giving up one unearned run and striking out four.

The team now wants to keep Pineda in a controlled environment for this second outing. A few factors played into the decision: The Tampa Yankees were on their All-Star Break. The team preferred not to have Pineda travel to a Double-A game in Altoona, Pa. or a Class-A game in Charleston, S.C. Plus, Girardi said, Pineda underwent a long inning during his last start. The club wants him to avoid that during the early stages of his return from shoulder surgery.

"It's one start," Girardi said before Wednesday's game against the Athletics.

"It's not a big deal. It will probably be the only simulated game he throws. So it just works out better."

A rainout last Saturday altered the team's schedule. Otherwise, Pineda could have pitched for Tampa on Thursday night. The All-Star Break begins Friday.

"If Tampa would have been at home, he would have pitched in that game," Girardi said.

The announcement came after a bit of confusion on Tuesday. General manager Brian Cashman told The Star-Ledger via email that Pineda would start for Class-A Charleston. He also reportedly told the New York Post that Pineda would pitch for Double-A Trenton. Cashman did not respond to an inquiry seeking clarification.

After giving up six runs on Tuesday night, CC Sabathia has a 4.07 ERA. That number alone is not too disconcerting. But one part of his stat sheet stands out. Sabathia has already allowed 14 homers, and is on pace for a career high in that category. His previous high was 22 in 2012. He gave up 17 in 2011.

"We're aware of it," Girardi said. "We understand that the fastball velocity is not what it used to be. My thought is: He can still really pitch at a high level.

"Will he give up maybe more home runs than he did last year? Probably. It would be great if he didn't, if he pitched really well. But it's part of it. You have to deal with it. And you learn from it."

The Yankees agreed to terms with first-round pick Eric Jagielo, the third baseman from Notre Dame. Baseball America reported Jagielo signed for the full slot amount, a little more than \$1.839 million. The team also signed fourth-round shortstop Tyler Wade, fifth-round right-hander David Palladino and sixth-round shortstop John Murphy.

YESNetwork.com

06/12/2013 11:20 PM ET

Michael Pineda to make second rehab start in a simulated game on Friday

Tampa Yankees off-day will push righty into a start at the team complex

By Lou DiPietro

The Yankees have officially announced that pitcher Michael Pineda's second rehab appearance will, like his first, come in Florida, only this one will be a simulated game at the team's complex in Tampa on Friday.

Pineda made his rehab debut with the Class-A Advanced Tampa Yankees on Sunday, one day later than expected because of a rainout the night before. He threw 68 pitches over 4.1 innings in that debut, allowing one unearned run on two hits while walking one and striking out four.

The T-Yanks are off Friday because of the Florida State League All-Star Game this weekend, and the rainout last Saturday prevented Pineda from being on schedule to pitch their final game before the break on Thursday.

Prior to the Yankees' game in Oakland Wednesday night, manager Joe Girardi intimated that schedule snafu - as well as the team's desire to keep Pineda out of long innings as much as possible early in his rehab - played the biggest roles in the simulated game decision, and not any kind of setback or disappointment.

"It's one start," Girardi said. "It's not a big deal. It will probably be the only simulated game he throws. So it just works out better."

Travel also was a factor, as the team preferred to not have Pineda head to either Charleston, S.C. (to pitch for the Class-A RiverDogs) or Altoona, Penn. (to pitch for the Double-A Trenton Thunder in a road game) for one start.

"If Tampa would have been at home, he would have pitched in that game," Girardi said. <> The Yankees' reported plan is to increase Pineda's workload by seven or eight pitches in each rehab start, so the righty is expected to throw around 75 pitches on Friday.

Prior to that simulated game announcement, there had been multiple conflicting reports about Pineda's status; the *Newark Star-Ledger* reported that general manager Brian Cashman told them via email that Pineda would make his next start for Charleston,

while Ken Davidoff of the New York Post [had Tweeted on Tuesday](#) that Cashman confirmed Pineda's second rehab start would come with the Thunder.

Looking forward, if Pineda stays on a five-day schedule, his next three outings after Friday would come on June 19, 24, and 29; Tampa is at Dunedin, home vs. Clearwater, and at Dunedin on those three dates, while Trenton is at Akron, home vs. Erie, and at Binghamton.

CC's big drop-off



CC Sabathia has been victimized by homers this season — he has allowed 14, two more than Phil Hughes entering last night.

Lower velocity leading to HRs

BY ERIK BOLAND *Newsday*
erik.boland@newsday.com *coll3*

OAKLAND, Calif. — A quick question, and please give a knee-jerk response.

Which Yankees pitcher has given up the most home runs this season?

Most fans' initial thought would be Phil Hughes, a logical answer given that the righthander allowed 35 homers last season, tied for second most in the majors.

And while Hughes is again on pace to give up his share — 12 entering last night's start against the Athletics — to this point it's been CC Sabathia most victimized by the long ball, having allowed a team-high 14. That ranks him third in the AL behind the Royals' Jeremy Guthrie and the Orioles' Chris Tillman, who have allowed 16 apiece.

When asked if he was surprised by the number of homers Sabathia has surrendered, catcher Chris Stewart said, "A little bit. I just think he goes out and he throws strikes. Sometimes if you miss with those strikes and guys are ultra-aggressive guys are going to hit them out of the park. Normally when he's on, his ball is moving and it's to location. If he's not, then he gets in trouble."

Sabathia allowed two blasts, including a crucial three-run shot off the bat of Derek Norris, in the Yankees' 6-4 loss Tuesday, part of a game in which the lefthander fell to 6-5 with a 4.07 ERA after he allowed six runs and eight hits in six innings.

Joe Girardi said the homer trend wasn't alarming, but...

"We're aware of it," Girardi said before last night's game. "And we understand the fastball velocity isn't what it used to be, but my thought is he can still really pitch at a high level. Will he give up more home runs this year than last year? Probably. It would be great if he didn't but it's part of it and you have to deal with it."

Sabathia allowed 22 homers in 28 starts last season and 17

YANKS RESULT

Read about last night's late Yanks-A's game at newsday.com/yankees

Today

Yankees

at Oakland

TV: YES, 3:35 p.m.

Radio: WCBS (880)



in 33 starts in 2011.

The lefthander's velocity drop has been a hot-button issue all season because his fastball, which once consistently reached the mid-90s, has hovered around in the 89-91 range this season.

According to PitchFX, Sabathia's fastball averaged 91.2 mph Tuesday.

Simply put, Sabathia's margin for error on pitches isn't what it used to be. For example, the 1-and-0 fastball Coco Crisp hit out in the first inning came in at 90 mph.

"He threw Coco a fastball that cut," Girardi said. "And maybe if it's 95, 94, you get away with it. But at 89, 90 he didn't."

It should be pointed out, and pitching coach Larry Rothschild has made the point repeatedly, that Sabathia got off to a pretty good start. He went 4-2 with a 3.35 ERA in six starts in April, but followed that with a 1-2, 4.14 performance in six May outings.

Sabathia had turned in two straight strong starts before Tuesday night's poor one.

It is, Rothschild and Sabathia have said, all about location.

"In this league, if you have velocity but not location, you're going to get hit most of the time," Rothschild said after Sabathia's rough outing May 26 against the Rays in St. Petersburg, Fla., when he allowed seven runs in seven innings. "You get away with more pitches at higher velocities, but the thing I focus on is we have to execute those pitches consistently. Early in the season, he had the same velocity and pitched really well. It's just executing pitches a little bit better."

newsday.com NEWSDAY, THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2008

Sabathia has been swatted

Yankees' lefty has allowed 14 homers

By Chad Jennings
cjennings@lohud.com

Journal News
6/13

OAKLAND — First-pitch curveball, trying to surprise a second-year player who'd hit just two home runs all season. CC Sabathia threw the pitch, then turned to watch the ball disappear over the outfield wall.

The three-run homer by Oakland catcher Derek Norris was a game changer on Tuesday, but it was shockingly par for the course this season. Sabathia, who has rarely allowed home runs in his career, has coughed up 14 homers this season.

Tuesday's two-homer game left him allowing the most home runs on the Yankees' staff and the third-most home runs in the American League.

"If you want to multiply that over 32 games and assume that's what he's going to give, you can do that," manager Joe Girardi said. "But I'm not going to bet on that."

See YANKS, Page 5C

ON THE WEB

Wednesday night's Yankees game ended after press time. For the game story and more, go to The LoHud Yankees Blog at yankees.lhblogs.com.

YANKS: Sabathia lacking consistency

Continued from Page 1C

In his career, Sabathia has averaged almost exactly 32 starts per season, but he's never allowed more than 22 home runs and has only once allowed more than 20. This year, he's on pace for 32 homers.

"We're aware of it," Girardi said. "We understand the fastball velocity is not what it used to be, but my thought is, he can still really pitch at a high level. Will he give up more home runs this year than last year? Probably."

At 32 years old, with a fastball that's roughly 2 mph slower than it was at his peak, Sabathia has a 4.07 ERA. That's not bad, but certainly not what the Yankees have come to expect.

"You're always (hopeful) after a couple good starts," Sabathia said. "The last two, I was feeling pretty good. You just want to keep it rolling. I wasn't able to do that (Tuesday)."

Are the home runs a product of diminished



Yankees starting pitcher CC Sabathia's inconsistency this season can partly be blamed on his penchant for giving up the long ball. AP

arm strength? Girardi acknowledged it's possible. While Sabathia has had some dominant starts this season, he's lacked some of the consistency that he's shown in the past, and his mistakes seem to be hit harder and farther than before.

"I just think that he goes out and he throws strikes," catcher Chris Stewart said. "Sometimes if you miss with those strikes and guys are ul-

tra-aggressive, they're going to hit them out of the park. Normally when he's on, his ball is moving and it's to location, so it takes advantage of that aggressiveness. If it's not, then he gets in trouble."

Pineda's simulated rehab: Having already started a minor-league rehab assignment, Michael Pineda's next outing will be a simulated game in-

stead of a second start with High-A Tampa.

"It has nothing to do with an injury," Girardi said. "If Tampa would have been at home, he would have pitched in that game. But they're on the road. ... It's one start. It's not a big deal; it will probably be the only simulated game he throws. It just works out better."

Yankee clippings: The Yankees announced that they have already agreed to terms with 13 draft picks included their top selection, Notre Dame third baseman Eric Jagielo. ... With fly-ball pitcher Phil Hughes on the mound, the Yankees did not give Lyle Overbay a second straight start in the outfield on Wednesday. "He'll make another start out there," Girardi said. ... After hurting his hamstring on Tuesday, Athletics left fielder Yoenis Cespedes was held out of Oakland's lineup on Wednesday and remains day-to-day.

Now Do You Miss Jeter?

Yankee Captain's Fill-Ins Are Falling Short

By DANIEL BARBARISI

June 12, 2013, 8:28 p.m. ET

As the primary fill-in for injured Yankee shortstop Derek Jeter, Jayson Nix has done everything the Yankees have asked of him. As of late, he's picked up his hitting—and the Yankees are thrilled with what they've gotten from Nix.

"He's swung the bat really well the last month and a half, for me," Yankee manager Joe Girardi said. "He's played a good shortstop for us."

And it still isn't nearly enough.

Jeter has been maligned in past years for being less than he once was, for his poor range at shortstop, for his declining power and batting averages. Yet the performance of his replacements serves as a testament both to how great Jeter has been, and how tough it is to find a good shortstop, and how superior even a diminished Jeter would be now—baseball's version of 'you don't know what you've got til it is gone.'

Even after Nix's recent hot streak, Yankee shortstops rank at or near the bottom in nearly all offensive and defensive categories. The three-headed monster that the Yankees have used at shortstop this year has been comprised of Nix, the injured Eduardo Nunez, and early-May acquisition Reid Brignac, and to this point, they've been head-slappingly bad.

The group's .227 average is fifth-worst in baseball. Its .283 slugging percentage is third worst. Yankee shortstops are striking out 25.9% of the time, worst in baseball. And perhaps the most jarring stat: Yankee shortstops have hit only one home run—only the Texas Rangers have fewer from the position.

And for all the talk about Jeter's defense, which certainly has declined over the years, Jeter's replacements have been nothing special either. Nix is a utility infielder ill-suited to be an everyday shortstop, and Nunez, before he succumbed to injury, wasn't distinguishing himself either.

Measured by the defensive metric ultimate zone rating, Yankee shortstops have, as a group, been worth -4.5 UZR, which is sixth-worst in all of baseball.

It is a reminder of how lucky the Yankees have been for the last 17 years, in that they have run out one of the best players to ever play the shortstop position, day-in-and-day out. In by far his worst season, 2011, Jeter hit .270 with 10 home runs and a .710 OPS (on-base plus slugging percentage) And now that he is absent, those numbers seem like a dream for Yankee shortstops.

Jeter will see his doctor, Robert Anderson, in Charlotte, North Carolina on Thursday, and could be cleared to begin running. If all goes well, it stands to reason that Jeter should be back from his broken ankle sometime after the All Star break, though Girardi wouldn't give even a rough timetable.

"It's hard to say, because you don't know where exactly he is when he is cleared compared with coming in for a normal spring training and saying six weeks," Girardi said. "You know they can do everything at that point."

Nunez was supposed to stabilize the position in Jeter's absence, and prove that he's a major league-caliber shortstop. Instead, he didn't hit a lick (.200 batting average, .565 OPS), and has spent the past month on the disabled list with rib cage muscle problems.

Brignac, a waiver wire pickup from Colorado, fields well, but he hasn't hit at all. The 27-year-old has been remarkably futile in his 29 at-bats, slapping three singles, a double, and not walking once, for an unsightly .138 batting average.

Then there is Nix. Nix has actually notched hits in 12 of his last 14 games, raising his average to .250, with a .620 OPS; his positional flexibility, Girardi noted, makes him a great asset.

"He gives us great flexibility as well because you can play him at second, short or third, and I'm not afraid to put him in the outfield," Girardi said.

Nix is an excellent utility player, capable of filling in all over the diamond. But as a starting shortstop for a playoff team, he's not up to snuff. Nunez, when healthy, wasn't proving to be a long-term solution. Brignac can field but not hit.

Is it too late to tell Jeter sorry, please come back soon—he'll be appreciated now?

LoHud Yankees Blog

Gardner: "Be ready to hit; get good pitches to hit"

Posted by: Chad Jennings - Posted in Misc on Jun 12, 2013

With few alternatives on the roster, Brett Gardner has emerged as the Yankees everyday center fielder and leadoff hitter, and he's made the most of it with the highest batting average on the team and a recent hot streak that's made him the American League's Player of the Week.

"When Jeet started the year on the DL, we just said he was going to be our leadoff hitter," Joe Girardi said. "I've always liked him up there. ... He's swung the bat well against left handers and worked pitchers. We like that. I think that's important."

Gardner talked a little bit yesterday about his strong return from the disabled list, his surprising number of home runs and his occasionally hard-to-explain hesitation on the bases.

Feel good to have a set spot in the lineup and in the field?

"It's just been good to be healthy and be out there. I haven't really thought about it like that, but it's been good to be able to come to the field knowing you're going to be leading off and playing center field. I guess it makes things a little easier, maybe."

Intentionally being more aggressive early in the count?

"Maybe a little bit. I haven't really tried to change my approach up too much, just be ready to hit (and) get good pitches to hit. If I'm feeling good and swinging the bat well, there's no need to wait around for an 0-2 changeup if you can get a fastball early in the count over the plate. You swing at pitches you're supposed to swing at and take pitches you should be taking."

Any reason for all the home runs?

"I never go up there trying to hit a home run. Last year was pretty much a wasted year for me. I've always been trying to work with K Long on taking my A swing and being more consistent. It's always been a work in progress. Still trying to make improvements with it. Maybe a little bit of that is paying off. ... I don't really worry about that. I might end up with six or seven home runs. I might end up with 15 or something. I'm not concerned with that. My job's to get on base. If I turn on one and hit it good, then great, but I'm happier hitting line drives up the middle."

Numbers especially satisfying after missing most of last year?

"I don't really worry about the results as much, just (happy about) being able to stay healthy and stay on the field. My elbow has felt great the whole year. I was a little concerned about that just because at the end of the season last year I didn't get many at-bats with it. Always wondered in the offseason how it's going to feel, but it's felt great. I've been healthy so I can't complain."

Why go long periods of time without running very much?

"I wouldn't say anyone thing in particular. Maybe I feel better. Maybe sometimes I'm not running, maybe I don't feel great. Maybe the guy behind me is swinging earlier in the count and

I don't get as many opportunities. ... I think the first month, month and a half of the season I wasn't getting on base a lot. Been getting on base more recently. I feel like I've been doing a better job of getting on base, been taking some more walks, that leads to opportunities to run. "I know that's a big part of my game, and I know I want to get into scoring position for Robbie, but early in the season I got thrown out with Robbe Cano at the plate, and that's not something that I want to do. Just because I'm over there at first base, even if I'm not running, it's changing the way he's getting pitched. He should be getting more fastballs to hit, and hopefully he get on a tear here and finish up this road trip nice and help us keep winning."

Does it make more sense to not run with Cano at the plate?

"I wouldn't say it makes more sense. If I'm going to be safe 100 percent of the time, I might as well go and take second base. If they want to walk him, so be it and let Vernon or whoever's behind him hit. It's just a matter of, our lineup's a little different than we might have expected coming into the season. We got a lot of guys hurt, and nobody probably felt Robbie Cano would be hitting second most of the time but that's where he's been. I'm not using him hitting behind me as an excuse for not running more, that's for sure. I've sat down and talked to him and he wants me to run whenever I can run. Maybe I'll have a good week on the bases, we'll see."

6/12/2013 10:51 P.M. ET

Overbay's exposure to outfield a work in progress

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Joe Girardi tempted fate before Tuesday night's game against the Athletics when he noted that Lyle Overbay had been flawless in his first three games playing right field in the big leagues.

Though no error was charged, Overbay's inexperience showed in the second inning of the Yankees' 6-4 loss as the longtime first baseman allowed Derek Norris' soft double to fall between him, second baseman Robinson Cano and first baseman Mark Teixeira, driving in Oakland's second run.

Girardi said that he is not rethinking the experiment of having Overbay play the outfield, an avenue to keep him active on the roster now that Teixeira has reclaimed first base.

"It's something new for him, that's the bottom line," Girardi said. "There is a learning curve. We expect that he can make it pretty quickly. He'll make the adjustments."

Overbay, 36, was drafted as an outfielder by the D-backs but converted to first base early in his Minor League career, playing just 30 professional games in the outfield before this season.

He has been working with third-base coach Rob Thomson on positioning and various scenarios, and said that his mistake was not taking into account how challenging of a play Norris' bloop presented for Cano from second base.

"I didn't think that I could catch it, so I figured, let Robbie try," Overbay said. "I think if I had it all over again, he was playing up the middle so I should've known that he wasn't going to have a chance to get it. Maybe I could lay out or something. I knew I couldn't get it, so I was kind of hoping he might have a chance."



Lyle Overbay still learning the ropes as Yankees outfielder

By Andy McCullough/The Star-Ledger

on June 12, 2013 at 3:29 PM, updated June 12, 2013 at 4:13 PM

OAKLAND – As a first baseman for 13 big-league seasons, Lyle Overbay built a memory bank of fielding plays. Little can surprise him. He can visualize most every scenario, and how he would handle the moment.

In his new life as an outfielder, an experiment that cost the Yankees on Tuesday night against the Athletics, he lacks similar resources. Most everything is new to him.

“Guys who have played in the outfield enough, they can kind of react,” Overbay said over the weekend in Seattle. “Just like me at first [base].”

When Andy Pettitte returned from the disabled list on June 3, the Yankees bucked conventional wisdom. Rather than designate Overbay for assignment – or option infielder David Adams – they shipped outfielder Brennan Boesch to Triple A. With Boesch gone, the team opted for an unexpected scheme: Overbay would play right field, a position he had never tried before in the majors.

The idea worked for a few reasons. The team hoped to retain Overbay as an insurance policy for first baseman Mark Teixeira and designated hitter Travis Hafner. They also understood Overbay was still a useful offensive player,

especially against right-handed pitchers. Overbay has an .839 on-base plus slugging percentage against righties.

After Boesch's demotion, Overbay started three games in a row at Yankee Stadium. He did not cost his team in the field. And he continued to be a useful, left-handed hitter. But he sat out the entirety of the four-game series in Seattle. Manager Joe Girardi appears reluctant to use Overbay away from home, where right field is cozy.

In the second inning on Tuesday, with Overbay playing right, the Yankees received a reminder of the risk they took. With Josh Reddick at second base, CC Sabathia faced catcher Derek Norris. He stuffed a 3-1 fastball low in the zone, and jammed Norris. The resulting pop fly drifted toward the right-field line.

Both second baseman Robinson Cano and Overbay gave chase. Overbay assumed Cano would be there, he would say later. This assumed knowledge dissuaded him from diving. Instead, the baseball dropped between them.

Jogging in, Overbay reached to scoop the ball. He mishandled the exchange. On the bases, Reddick kept chugging. Once Overbay had a handle on the ball, he uncorked a wide throw home that bounced. Chris Stewart had to step off the plate to receive it. He couldn't drop a tag on Reddick.

Girardi declined to place much emphasis on Overbay's novice status as an outfielder. He failed at a routine act, one he completed often as a first baseman.

"It's picking up a ball that's on the ground," Girardi said. "But I think Robby cut in front of him, and blinded him a little bit."

As Overbay saw it, his mistake did not arise from a lack of imagination. It came from improper preparation. He blamed himself for not checking Cano's positioning before the play began. Cano had set up closer to the bag. Overbay was unaware.

"That's the only time I didn't pay attention to where he was playing," he said. "If I know he's up the middle, I know he's got a long way to go . . . I've just got to pay attention to those little things like that."

Going forward, the Yankees have few other options but to stick with Overbay. Boesch is on the Triple-A disabled list due to shoulder issues.

Asked if this was an example of his inexperience, Overbay shrugged. .

"A little bit," Overbay said. "It's more of my preparation, making sure where [Cano] is, and knowing what he can do and can't do. That's a long run for him when he's playing up the middle."



Wednesday, June 12, 2013

Another free-agency audition for Hughes

By Andrew Marchand

In 16 career innings in Oakland, [Phil Hughes](#) has a 1.69 ERA. The O.co Coliseum is a fly-ball pitchers park, built perfectly for Hughes to demonstrate his free-agent value.

When Hughes starts on Wednesday night, Joe Girardi will surely throw out his best defensive outfield with [Brett Gardner](#) in center, [Ichiro Suzuki](#) in right and [Vernon Wells](#) in left and hope that they can chase everything down.

Hughes, who is 3-4 with a 4.80 ERA in 12 starts this season, is [not a fit for Yankee Stadium](#). One Yankees official recently described him as "No. 4 starter," which might be his ceiling in the AL East.

The same official acknowledged that in a different park and maybe a different league, Hughes might bump up a few notches in a rotation.

So with [Hal's budget colliding](#) with Hughes' free agency, it seems like Hughes will be worth more to somebody else than he is to the Yankees.

The Yankees could be left with nothing, unless they offer him a qualifying offer of \$13.3 million. If Hughes were to turn it down, then the Yankees would receive a first-round pick after Hughes signed as a free agent with another team.

If Hughes were to finish, say, 15-10 with a 4.20 ERA, you might consider making the qualifier even though it is quite the increase from the \$7.15 million he is making this season. Ultimately, the offer would be made for the same reason that the Yankees extended an offer to [Nick Swisher](#) this past winter.

The Yankees had no intention of bringing back Swisher, but they wanted the first-round pick they would receive if Swisher left. If the Yankees won't offer Hughes a qualifier, then maybe you consider trading him now. [Ivan Nova](#), [Vidal Nuno](#) or [Michael Pineda](#) might be just as good as Hughes, perhaps even better. Most likely, the Yankees keep Hughes through the year.

If so, the Yankees and Hughes are set for a game of chicken. It is not impossible that the Yankees sign him long-term, but he seems unlikely since he will be worth more to somewhere else than he is in the Bronx. So the Yankees will have to decide if they put out the qualifier, hoping Hughes doesn't accept or do they just lose him for nothing.

On Wednesday night, Hughes can make all the teams with big ballparks, like the Padres and the Mets, dream about what Hughes might be at the right park.

6/12/2013 6:21 P.M. ET

Yankees agree to terms with top pick Jagielo

Notre Dame third baseman signs for slot value with bonus of \$1,839,400

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The Yankees have signed first-round Draft choice Eric Jagielo, a left-handed-hitting third baseman from Notre Dame.

The 26th overall selection in last week's First-Year Player Draft, Jagielo will receive slot value with a signing bonus of a little more than \$1,839,400.

The 2013 Big East Player of the Year, Jagielo batted .388 with nine home runs during his junior campaign with the Fighting Irish. He led the conference with a .500 on-base percentage and a .633 slugging percentage.

A 21-year-old product of the Chicago area, Jagielo also clubbed 13 home runs in the Cape Cod League this year. He said on a conference call last week that he sees a chance to move up quickly through the Yankees' organization at third base.

"I definitely see an opportunity," Jagielo said. "That was the biggest thing, hoping I would be drafted by some team that I can see myself in the future at the big league level at third base."

Jagiello was named a semifinalist for the 2013 USA Baseball Golden Spikes Award and was the Yankees' first selection in the Draft. His selection marked the first time the Yankees have taken a college position player with their first pick since outfielder Jon-Ford Griffin in 2001.

"I had pretty extensive contact with [the Yankees]," Jagielo said. "My agent, Mark Rodgers, kept telling me I was one of their top guys. When I was going through and watching people come off the board, I kind of had a feeling I was going to be selected by them."

The organization followed with Fresno State outfielder Aaron Judge, with the No. 32 overall pick, and high school pitcher Ian Clarkin, with the No. 33 choice.

Jagiello said that his immediate goals within the Yankees' organization will be to prove that he can play at whatever level he is assigned.

"[I plan to] just kind of go out there and earn the respect and the right that everybody in the organization wants to play at the big league level," Jagiello said. "Go about my business the right way and just compete every day to win that spot."

The Yankees also announced 12 additional signings from this year's Draft: shortstop Tyler Wade (fourth round), right-hander David Palladino (fifth), shortstop John Murphy (sixth), right-hander Philip Walby (12th), right-hander Cale Coshow (13th), left-hander Caleb Smith (14th), center fielder Jordan Barnes (15th), second baseman Derek Toadvine (22nd), right-hander Sam Agnew-Wieland (24th), catcher Trent Garrison (28th), shortstop Kevin Cornelius (31st) and second baseman Hector Crespo (34th).



Yankees sign first-round pick Eric Jagielo, report says

Andy McCullough/The Star-Ledger By Andy McCullough/The Star-Ledger

on June 12, 2013 at 11:40 AM, updated June 12, 2013 at 11:43 AM

OAKLAND – The Yankees have agreed to terms with Eric Jagielo, their first first-round pick from last Thursday's MLB draft. Jagielo signed for \$1.839 million, according to Baseball America.

Jagielo, a left-handed hitting third baseman from Notre Dame, was the 26th pick in the draft. MLB's recommended slot bonus for that pick was \$1.839 million.

Jagielo posted a 1.133 OPS during his junior year for the Fighting Irish.

Aaron Judge, the team's pick at No. 32, visited the club here on Tuesday. He took batting practice before the game. Judge, a 6-7 outfielder from Fresno State, expects to sign soon.

The Yankees are also confident they can lock up Ian Clarkin, their choice at No. 33. Clarkin, a left-hander from James Madison High in San Diego, has said he needs "life-changing money" to avoid college.

YES Network

Yankees officially sign top 2013 draftee Eric Jagielo Ex-Notre Dame 3B signs for exact slot bonus of almost \$1.84 million

06/12/2013 3:50 PM ET
By Lou DiPietro

The New York Yankees officially announced Wednesday that they have signed No. 26 overall pick Eric Jagielo, making the former Notre Dame third baseman one of several to have either inked or agreed to a deal in the first week after the MLB Draft.

Although the team did not release official terms, *Baseball America* insider Jim Callis reports that Jagielo's signing bonus is \$1,839,400 – which is the exact slot bonus for the No. 26 pick.

While the team has not officially announced any signings other than Jagielo as of Wednesday, he is at least the fifth draftee to sign according to multiple outlets. The others:

-Courtesy of [Baseball America](#), Murrieta Valley (CA) HS shortstop Tyler Wade (Rd. 4) signed for his exact slot bonus of just over \$371K, while Grayson County (TX) CC shortstop Kevin Cornelius (Rd. 31) has signed for a bonus that was not disclosed but is likely the post-10th round norm of \$100K.

-Based on the [Twitter feed](#) of Yankees draft insider K. Levine-Flandrup, Howard College (TX) RHP David Palladino (Rd. 5) has signed, spurning a commit and scholarship to LSU that was bumped up to a full ride in the last week, while Rockwall (TX) HS outfielder Kendall Jackson (Rd. 11) and Oklahoma Christian University RHP Cale Coshow (Rd. 13) have both agreed to terms, pending physicals.

-River Avenue Blues' [2013 draft pool page](#) lists Sacred Heart University shortstop John Murphy (Rd. 6) as having signed, with Murphy's Twitter feed seeming to confirm his signing. In addition, RAB reports that Northwest Mississippi CC outfielder Jordan Barnes (Rd. 15) is in Tampa and will sign soon pending a physical, while Kent State University second baseman Derek Toadvine (Rd. 22) "anticipates signing soon."

-Among the unsigned, Flandrup reports that the Yankees' top two prep selections, LHP Ian Clarkin (Rd. 1, No. 33 overall) from San Diego's Madison HS and Rancho Bernardo (CA) HS second baseman Gosuke Katoh (Rd. 2) will fly together from San Diego to Tampa on Monday and are expected to sign. High school players cannot sign until they graduate, meaning Clarkin, who graduated Tuesday, just became eligible, while Katoh (who graduates Thursday) is almost there – but Katoh told a local reporter after being selected late last week that "if everything works out like it should with no road bumps, then I should be a Yankee by next week."

06/12/2013 11:12 AM ET

By the Numbers: The Yankees Draft Class of 2013

Lou DiPietro

The 2013 MLB Draft saw several baseball legacies – and nearly a thousand “newcomers” – hear their names called last week.

With the Short-Season Class-A and Rookie Leagues all set to begin over the next 10 days and the deadline for signing draft picks being July 12 at 5 p.m. ET, everyone will get a professional look at those who do become the future of their organizations very soon.

The Yankees had three first-round picks, giving them a total of 42 selections this year, and we turn the spotlight over to those three-and-a-half dozen new potential Baby Bombers in the latest edition of By the Numbers.

2001: The last time the Yankees had three-first round picks was 2001, when they selected Florida State OF John-Ford Griffin (No. 23), Kamehameha (HI) HS IF Bronson Sardinha (No. 34), and Rice RHP Jon Skaggs (No. 42). That 2001 first-round also saw Joe Mauer taken No. 1 overall, David Wright taken at No. 38, and current Yankees Mark Teixeira (No. 5) and Jayson Nix (No. 45) chosen by Texas and Colorado respectively.

5: With the Yankees' selection of Notre Dame third baseman Eric Jagielo at No. 26, the team broke a string of five straight years that the team had used its first overall selection on a high schooler; prior to Jagielo, then-North Carolina State RHP Andrew Brackman, who was the No. 30 selection in 2007, was the last collegian to be the Yankees' first choice.

15/27: Of their 42 picks, only 15 of them did come from the prep ranks, with 27 being selected out of a college or university.

2: The Yankees did take two players who came from the immediate footprint of Yankee Stadium: sixth-rounder John Murphy and 20th-rounder Dillon McNamara. Murphy, a shortstop, is from Seymour, Conn., and attended Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Conn., and McNamara is a Staten Island native who was chosen out of Long Island's Adelphi University.

6: The deadline to sign players isn't until July 12, but just days after the draft, it appeared that five were already in the fold or about to join it; according to River Avenue Blues and Baseball America, both Murphy and Jagielo had signed or agreed to terms, with fourth-rounder Tyler Wade, 13th-rounder Cale Coshow, 15th-rounder Jordan Barnes, and 22nd-rounder Derek Toadvine close to doing so as of Wednesday morning.

2: On the flip side, there are at least two that appear as if they will not sign; 30th-rounder Cody Thomas, who is committed to play both football and baseball at Oklahoma, has been reported to be set to honor that commitment, while 37th-rounder Josh Pettitte has said he will go with his family's wishes and honor his commitment to Baylor.

4: Speaking of Josh Pettitte, he is one of four players drafted by the Yankees in 2013 who have a Yankee relative; Andy's son joins third-rounder Michael O'Neill, who is the nephew of Paul O'Neill, 26th-rounder Cal Quantrill, who is Paul Quantrill's son, and 28th-rounder Trent Garrison, the twin brother of Taylor Garrison, the Yankees' seventh-round pick in 2012 who is currently at Class-A Advanced Tampa.

3: The SEC is known as a college football powerhouse, but for the second straight year, the Yankees selected three SEC players in the Top 10 rounds of the draft; following the 2012 triad of LSU RHP Nick Goody (Rd. 6), Alabama OF Taylor Dugas (Rd. 8), and Auburn RHP Derek Varnadore (Rd. 9), the Yankees took LSU RHP Nick Rumbelow (Rd. 7), Auburn LHP Conner Kendrick (Rd. 9), and South Carolina LHP Tyler Webb (Rd. 10) in 2013.

11: The youngest player selected by the Yankees was their 11th-round pick, Rockwall (TX) HS outfielder Kendall Coleman, whose date of birth is 5/22/95 – making him 18 years and 17 days old on the day he was selected.

19: On the flip side, the elder statesman of the draftees is 19th-round choice Andrew Beresford. A right-handed pitcher out of UNLV, Beresford was born on 2/26/90, making him 23 years, three months, and 13 days old at the time of his drafting. Fun fact: even if he debuted tomorrow, Beresford still wouldn't be the youngest Yankee of 2013, as he is roughly three weeks older than RHP Brett Marshall.

As Anchors Struggle, Yankees Feel the Pull

NY Times 6/13
By DAVID WALDSTEIN

OAKLAND, Calif. — The formula that has propelled the Yankees' success this season is rather simple. Good pitching has been their strongest attribute in the absence of several injured stars. There have been timely hits, to be sure, and solid defense. But pitching has been the cornerstone.

So when the Yankees' two top starting pitchers go through slumps of sorts, as they are now, it raises concern.

Both C. C. Sabathia and Hiroki Kuroda have struggled to find a steady groove the past few weeks. Sabathia thought he had turned a corner recently, but after he was battered by the Oakland A's on Tuesday night, the questions about his form remain pertinent.

Less obvious has been the plight of Kuroda, who was the Yankees' best starter for the first two months of the season. After posting a 6-2 record and 1.99

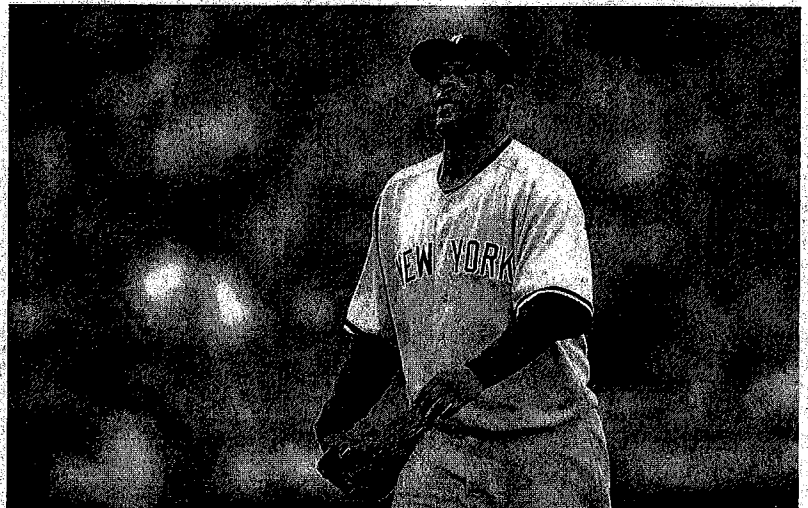
earned run average through May 17, Kuroda has not produced the same statistics, or the same results.

The Yankees have lost Kuroda's last four starts, and he is 0-3 with a 5.23 E.R.A. in that span. On Thursday, he will look to reverse a worrisome trend.

"I'm going to treat this outing as if it's going to be my last," Kuroda said, which is to say he will treat it like any other.

Kuroda (6-5) has taken that approach for many years, and it has sustained him through a remarkable career. Regardless of his recent downturn, Kuroda's career earned run average of 3.37 in six years in Major League Baseball is the lowest among Japanese-born pitchers with at least 50 starts.

Kuroda, whose E.R.A. has risen to 2.84, said he felt fit, taking into account the normal aches and soreness that pitchers experience. But he conceded that in the search for a win, he has become too cautious and has not



STEPHEN LAM/REUTERS

C. C. Sabathia (6-5) allowed two home runs and six runs over all in a loss to the A's on Tuesday.

pitched with his normal aggressive approach.

"I'm basically healthy, but you won't be in 100 percent condition throughout the whole season," Kuroda said through his interpreter. "Due to the fact I have not been able to contribute to a win the last few outings, I must admit I was a little too careful with my pitches."

Kuroda pitched well against the Mets on May 28, holding them scoreless through seven innings and allowing only four hits and striking out seven. The Yankees lost that game in the ninth inning when something even more unusual happened: Mariano Rivera gave up three straight hits and blew a save.

In his next two starts, Kuroda gave up seven runs in 11½ innings. He said he had not tried to make adjustments since because he did not want to overreact to a loss. It has been the same approach throughout his career.

Sabathia, however, might have to consider changes. The warning signs are more acute at this point, in part because of the diminished velocity on his fastball

and because his E.R.A. is 4.07. Sabathia has not finished a season with an E.R.A. over 4.00 since 2005.

Manager Joe Girardi conceded that with a slower fastball, Sabathia is not able to get away with mistakes as easily as he did in the past. No one knows exactly why he is throwing slower. It could be age — Sabathia turns 33 on July 21 — or a rising pitch count. His final inning Tuesday was his 1,000th as a Yankee, and he has a total of 2,659½ in his career. He also had minor elbow surgery in the off-season.

Most alarming are the home runs he has surrendered. He gave up two in the Athletics' 6-4 victory on Tuesday, and he has surrendered 14 in 14 starts. Last season he allowed 22 in 28 starts, and the year before it was only 17 in 33 starts.

"I mean, we're aware of it," Girardi said. "We understand the fastball velocity is not what it used to be. But my thought is he can still really pitch at a high level."

PINEDA'S START MOVED The Yankees switched Michael Pineda's

next rehabilitation start to a simulated game in Tampa, Fla., on Friday, Joe Girardi said, but only as a scheduling convenience. Girardi said there was nothing physically wrong with Pineda, who is in the final steps of his recovery from shoulder surgery. Girardi said the schedule was the issue; the Class A Tampa Yankees do not play Friday because of the Florida State League All-Star Game. The Yankees decided it was not necessary to put Pineda on a plane to another minor league team when he could get his work in during a simulated game.

"It's one start," Girardi said. "It's not a big deal."

EXTRA BASES The Yankees agreed to terms with the former Notre Dame third baseman Erik Jagielo, their first pick in the amateur draft, and 12 other lower picks. ... One night after making some mistakes in the outfield, Lyle Overbay was out of the starting lineup because the Yankees' starting pitcher was Phil Hughes, a fly-ball pitcher. Ichiro Suzuki was back in right field, and Vernon Wells started in left.

Pregame notes: "It will probably be the only simulated game he throws"

Posted By [Chad Jennings](#) On June 12, 2013 @ 8:46 pm In [Misc](#) | [19 Comments](#)

Nothing to see here. That was basically Joe Girardi's story regarding the decision to have Michael Pineda pitch a simulated game on Friday. Pineda has officially started a rehab assignment, yet the Yankees have decided to have him not pitch in a real game next time out.

"If (High-A) Tampa was home, he would have pitched with Tampa," Girardi said. "It's one start. It's not a big deal. It will probably be the only simulated game he throws. It just works out better."

There's also this...

"This way, we can control it," Girardi said. "The other day he had one long inning, and sometimes you worry about a guy that's rehabbing. This way you can build him up easier. He doesn't have to travel. Physically he's fine. Tuesday he threw his bullpen and he's ready to go."

It's unusual, obviously, but if there were any sort of serious problem or concern, it's hard to imagine Pineda would be pitching at all. Although Girardi repeatedly referred to Tampa being on the road on Friday, it seems that they're actually off that day ^[3] for the All-Star break.

"It has nothing to do with an injury," Girardi said. "If Tampa would have been at home, he would have pitched in that game."

- Girardi said Lyle Overbay's stint as an outfielder is not over, but tonight's combination of a fly ball pitcher in a stadium with a large outfield did not seem like a good match. "I did it with the lefty on the mound (last night)," Girardi said. "Hughes, you've got a fly ball pitcher so you want your (experienced) outfielders out there. ... (Overbay) will make another start out there."

- Last night Robinson Cano broke a streak of 10 straight games without multiple hits. He also broke a streak of 10 games without an extra-base hit. "It's good to see," Girardi said. "I don't ever worry too much about Robbie, but it's good to see him get a couple hits. Hopefully it will get him going because we know how hot he can get. He can carry a team."

- Mark Teixeira had three RBI last night. He has not gotten off to a particularly strong start, but he's already tied with Ichiro Suzuki for the seventh-most RBI on the team. "I thought it would probably take him a little while, him and Youk," Girardi said. "He's been productive in his at-bats. ... He's been very good in RBI situations. I think he's been patient, I haven't seen him swing at a lot of bad pitches, and that leads you to believe that he's seeing the ball good. If you're seeing the ball good, you're usually going to start to get hits."

- There was actually quite a bit of pregame talk about last night's CC Sabathia start, and the home runs Sabathia has allowed this season. "We're aware of it," Girardi said. "We understand the fastball velocity is not what it used to be, but my thought is, he can still really pitch at a high level. Will he give up more home runs this year than last year? Probably. It would be great if he didn't. It would mean he's pitching really well. But it's part of it. You have to deal with it, and you have to try to learn from it."

- Mariano Rivera did his Oakland meet-and-greet today. Not sure the details, but I think there was a surprise involved. It was different from the Q&A discussions he's done in other cities. This one wasn't open to the beat writers.

- Pregame talk is always a little light during these late West Coast games, and today was a perfect example. There just wasn't much news going on today. Some draft picks signed, Pineda is pitching on Friday and there were some typical lineup questions. Otherwise, it's a pretty light day so far.

ESPN.com

Wednesday, June 12, 2013

Pregame notes: Pineda, Overbay, CC

By Wallace Matthews

OAKLAND, Calif. -- The ever-changing rehab schedule of [Michael Pineda](#) took another turn today when Joe Girardi announced Pineda would pitch a simulated game in Tampa on Friday.

Originally, GM Brian Cashman told one reporter Pineda would start on Friday for the Double-A Trenton Thunder. Then he told another reporter Pineda would start for the Class A Charleston River Dogs.

[Lyle Overbay](#)

#55 1B
New York Yankees

2013 STATS

- GM56
- HR8
- RBI29
- R20
- OBP.289
- AVG.246

To confuse matters even further, Girardi today said Pineda would throw a simulated, rather than a real, game because the Class A Tampa Yankees were on the road and the organization decided not to send him on the trip "to better control the conditions."

All well and good, except for this: The Tampa Yankees are not on the road Friday, they are off.

What does it all mean? Who knows. But Girardi insisted that the change in plans, and the confusion surrounding them, have nothing to do with any issues involving Pineda's surgically-repaired shoulder.

"It has nothing to do with an injury," Girardi said. "If Tampa would have been at home, he would have pitched in that game. But they're on the road. This way, we can control it. The other day he had one long inning and sometimes you worry about a guy that's rehabbing. This way you can build him up easier, he doesn't have to travel. Physically he's fine. Tuesday he threw his bullpen and he's ready to go."

Whatever. All we know for sure is this: Michael Pineda will throw a simulated game Friday in Tampa.

In other news:

- Girardi said he will not hesitate to use [Lyle Overbay](#), whose misplay in Tuesday's 6-4 loss cost the Yankees a run, in right field again. However, he is not using him there tonight, even with another right-hander, [Dan Straily](#), starting for Oakland. Instead, [Vernon Wells](#) is in the lineup playing left and [Ichiro Suzuki](#) will play right.

The reason, Girardi said, is that with [Phil Hughes](#) on the mound, there figures to be plenty of fly balls hit into the spacious Oakland Coliseum outfield.

"He'll make another start out there," Girardi said. "It's something new for him, that's the bottom line. There is a learning curve. We expect that he can make it pretty quickly. He'll make the adjustments."

- Girardi said he did not give [CC Sabathia](#)'s disturbing Tuesday start, in which he allowed six earned runs and two long home runs, a second thought after the game.

"I think he's going to throw the ball good on Sunday [against the Angels]," he said. "That's my thought process. I've seen him do it too many times not to think that he's going to. We don't make too much of one game. A lot of other people can, but I'm not really afforded that luxury because we play 162. CC threw a couple of really good games. He had a good month of April. There's no reason he can't bounce back Sunday."

Girardi acknowledged, however, that having allowed 14 home runs in his first 14 starts -- he allowed a career-high 22 in 28 starts last year and just 17 in 33 starts in 2011 -- Sabathia could be on the way to surrendering his most-ever HRs this season.

"We're aware of it," Girardi said. "We understand the fastball velocity is not what it used to be, but my thought is, he can still really pitch at a high level. Will he give up more home runs this year than last year? Probably. It would be great if he didn't. It would mean he's pitching really well. But it's part of it. You have to deal with it, and you have to try to learn from it."

- Hughes has pitched well against the Athletics, with a 3-1 career record and 4.12 ERA in six career starts vs. Oakland. He has started twice at the Coliseum and is 1-1 with a 1.69 ERA. He pitched into the eighth inning in both of those starts.

- The Yankees have faced Straily just once, on May 5 in New York, where the right-hander got a no-decision in a 5-4 A's win. None of the Yankees has a sizable sample against Straily, who is 3-2 with a 4.67 ERA this year. Wells has faced him the most, with two hits in six career at-bats, one of them a home run.

- The Yankees have gone a season-high four games without hitting a home run -- the last Yankees HR was hit by [Mark Teixeira](#) in the third inning of Thursday's 6-1 win over the Mariners in Seattle -- and their record in such games this year is 8-15, which is one win better than they did in the same situation last season. Last year, the team that hit the most home runs in baseball was 7-24 in games in which they failed to homer.

ESPN.com

Thursday, June 13, 2013

First Pitch: Shortstop tops deadline needs

By Andrew Marchand

A baseball official with knowledge of the Yankees' thinking was asked, if you had to list the team's needs moving toward the July 31st trade deadline, what would be on top?

"Shortstop," the official said.

With [Derek Jeter](#) out, the Yankees have survived defensively, but offensively they [have been awful at short](#).

On Thursday, Jeter is going to the doctors to find out if he can ramp up his "baseball activities" and condition himself for a second-half return. Still, Jeter may not be the full answer.

The Yankees know that Jeter is turning 39 in less than two weeks and he is coming back from a serious ankle injury. Legend or not, what they do not know is what kind of durability and skill level he will have. The best-case scenario probably has Jeter hitting like last season, but still needing some time off, even if he will insist he doesn't.

Jeter might beat [Eduardo Nunez](#) back to the Bronx, because Nunez can't seem to shake an oblique injury that has kept him out a month and counting. Nunez is squandering a big opportunity. Nunez, who turns 26 on Saturday, has not done enough with the bat for the Yankees to feel confident in him. He has a .565 OPS. As a means of comparison, Jeter's OPS was .791 in 2012.

Plus, although the Yankees were thrilled that Nunez played better defense, they can't be sold yet that they can completely trust his glove and right arm. Meanwhile, [Jayson Nix](#) and [Reid Brignac](#) are not the answer. Nix is a useful utility guy, but the Yankees might need more no matter if Jeter comes back or not.

The Yankees wouldn't trade for a top of the line starter, that will be Jeter's job, but a more serviceable backup. The official mentioned Seattle's [Brendan Ryan](#), who doesn't hit much, but picks everything at short, as the type of player the Yankees could acquire.

In the outfield, [Curtis Granderson](#) should be back by the end of the month. Granderson and [Brett Gardner](#) will be set at two of the outfield positions, while [Ichiro Suzuki](#) and [Vernon Wells](#) could platoon at the other. While Wells has been slumping, he is still hitting lefties, he had a .300 average and .795 OPS against lefties entering Wednesday. Ichiro can still play defense and, when he does reach base, he is a threat.

The Yankees do have trade chips, most notably pitching. With [Michael Pineda](#) on his way back, the Yankees really have eight legitimate starters, which includes Pineda, [Vidal Nuno](#) and [Ivan Nova](#). Heck, [Adam Warren](#) has pitched well as the long man.

This is the time of year where Brian Cashman always acts as if he won't do anything. There are limitations on Cashman this year because of the \$189M mandate looming in 2014, but Cashman usually does something to try to give Joe Girardi a little extra help down the stretch. Shortstop, Jeter or no Jeter, could be where he looks to upgrade.

UP NOW: Wally Matthews has all the news and views from Wednesday night's game.

ON DECK: It is a day game in Oakland, which means a 3:35 p.m. ET start for New Yorkers. It will be [Hiroki Kuroda](#) (6-5, 2.84) vs. [Jarrod Parker](#) (5-6, 4.68).

QUESTION OF THE DAY: What would you like the Yankees to trade for?

Facing Young Star, Mets' Bats Come Alive

NY Times
6/13
By BENJAMIN HOFFMAN

The Mets seem to be underdogs each time they step on the field, but on Wednesday night they got timely hitting and rode a strong start by Dillon Gee to beat the St. Louis Cardinals, 5-1, at Citi Field.

METS 5
CARDINALS 1

The win could not have come at a better time for the Mets, who had lost three in a row and seven of eight since a five-game winning streak. But against Shelby Miller, one of the game's best young starting pitchers, the result did not seem likely.

Miller (7-4), a rookie who entered the game with a 1.91 earned run average, retired the first two batters he faced. Then the Mets' bats came alive.

David Wright doubled to right-center, and the Mets uncharacteristically did some damage with a runner on base. Over the team's last 24 games at home, the Mets had gone 28 for 179 (.156) with runners in scoring position, including 0 for 6 in Tuesday's loss to the Cardinals. But Daniel Murphy, starting again at first base in place of the demoted Ike Davis, singled to left, scoring Wright.

Lucas Duda then doubled to left, scoring Murphy. Duda and Wright later added solo home runs off Miller, spoiling Miller's first start in New York. The four earned runs were the most allowed by Miller in his 13 career starts, and his E.R.A. this season ballooned to 2.21.

"I gave up runs, and it's a learning experience for me because I didn't feel too bad out there," he said. "I made mistakes, and good-hitting ball clubs are going to put up runs when you're leaving it over the middle."

Marlon Byrd added a solo home run in the seventh off Cardinals reliever Seth Maness.

Gee (5-6), who entered the game with a 5.20 E.R.A., has earned a win in each of his last three starts. He pitched six and two-thirds innings, allowing one earned run and striking out seven before giving way to Scott Rice. Over his last three starts, Gee has struck out 26 batters and walked just three, and he has avoided fading late, a tendency that plagued him in the past.

"They say walks kill you, and they really do," Gee said of his recent strategy. "I'm just trying to be aggressive with all my pitches and keep them off balance."

Wright credited Gee with setting a good tone for the game, keeping the Cardinals off the board early after the Mets got out to a quick lead.

"Dillon was great like he's been the last few starts," Wright said. "We were able to jump on them early and just allow Dillon to go out there and pound the strike zone."

Gee's strong performance helped shift the attention back to the major league team and off the Mets' Class AAA affiliate in Las Vegas, where Davis is trying to work his way out of a slump and where Zack Wheeler, the team's soon-to-be-promoted top pitching prospect, has been playing.

Wheeler, rated the No. 11 prospect in the game by Baseball America, is scheduled to start the first game of a doubleheader against the Atlanta Braves on Tuesday.

The doubleheader would feature both of the Mets' top young arms: Matt Harvey would follow Wheeler in the second game. The only potential obstacle is a forecast for Thursday that calls for rain all day. If the game is postponed, the Mets rotation will be pushed back one day, most likely breaking up the pairing.

After Wednesday's game, Gee revealed that he had been dealing with forearm tendinitis over his last few starts. Identified by Manager Terry Collins as one of the players who could lose his spot in the starting rotation to Wheeler, Gee said that was not affecting him.

"Our job is the same no matter what," Gee said. "No matter who is coming or not coming or anything like that."

BASEBALL

Cardinals Built With Blueprint That Mets Can't Decipher

There was a cheeky little sequence on "Mad Men" last week in which a friend tells Don Draper that he has been meaning to ask him to a baseball game. The friend says he gets a lot of tickets, mostly for the Mets, and Don sniffs, "Well, I'm glad you didn't."

The scene was set in 1968, when the Mets finished ninth in a 10-team National League, and the actor who said the line, Jon Hamm, probably relished it. Hamm is a St. Louis Cardinals fan who narrated the official highlight film of the 2011 World Series.

Fans of the Cardinals have a strong distaste for the Mets, going back to the teams' duels in the 1980s. The Mets also beat the Cardinals for the 2000 N.L. pennant, but since the Cardinals got revenge six years later, it has not been a fair fight.

The visual is burned into the psyche of every Mets fan: Adam Wainwright's curveball freezing Carlos Beltran, ending Game 7 and lifting the Cardinals to the 2006 World Series. The Mets have not reached the postseason since. The Cardinals have won two titles and made two other trips to the playoffs.

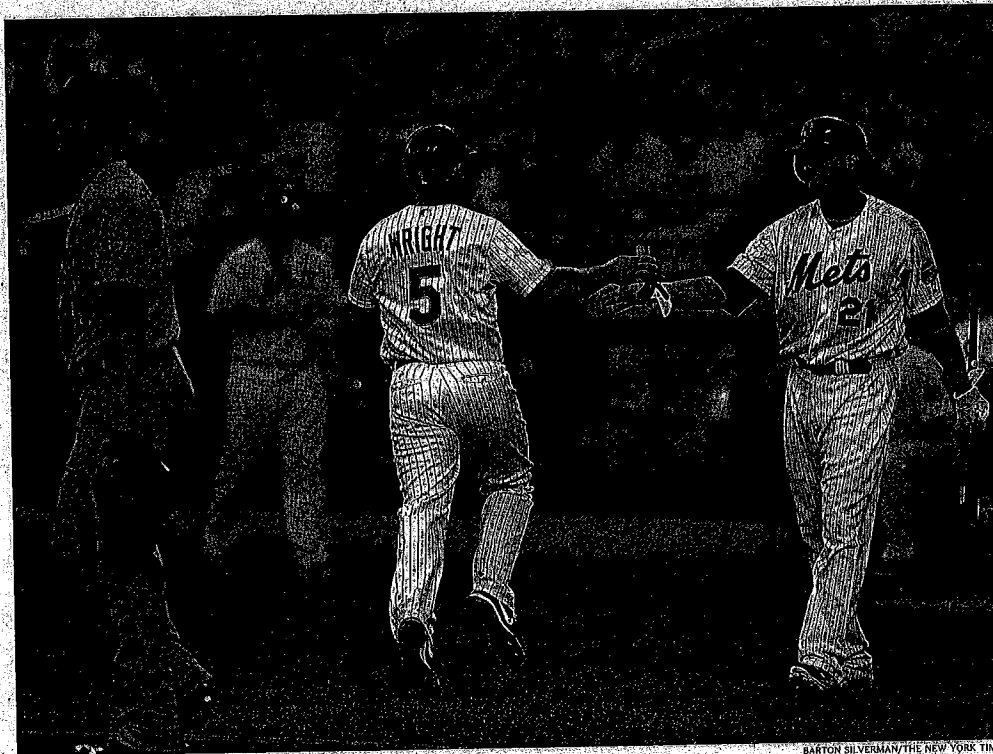
This year, the discrepancy could not be much wider. The Cardinals have baseball's best record, while the Mets are ahead of only two teams, the Houston Astros and the Miami Marlins. On Wednesday, Cardinals General Manager John Mozeliak tried to explain his team's consistent success.

"This might sound a little cheesy to you, but the one constant's been Bill DeWitt, from an ownership standpoint," said Mozeliak, whose first season with the Cardinals was 1996, the year DeWitt bought the team. "His leadership and his vision have enabled us to have the sustained success."

The Cardinals reached the N.L. Championship Series in 1996, also the first season for their former manager Tony La Russa, and have returned seven times since. The more they have won, Mozeliak said, the more empowered they have been to adhere to their principles.

"The key is remaining disciplined enough to that process where you don't start deviating because it just doesn't feel right," Mozeliak said, adding later, "Once you start doing an exception, you're going to start making multiple exceptions. One irrational decision can lead to multiple irrational decisions. So don't do it."

What, exactly, do the Mets believe in? For years after that 2000



David Wright with Lucas Duda after scoring against Shelby Miller, left, in the first. The Mets won, 5-1, a rare highlight in the rivalry. BARTON SILVERMAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Since the Called Third Strike

How the Mets and the Cardinals have fared since the Mets' loss to St. Louis in Game 7 of the N.L.C.S. in 2006.

METS

No playoff appearances
Two September collapses
Overall record of 500-531

CARDINALS

3 playoff appearances
2 World Series titles (2006, 2011)
Overall record of 561-475

pennant, they mostly believed in overspending for veterans. A few, like Beltran, helped out for a while. Most have been major disappointments.

Since the Wilpons hired Sandy Alderson as general manager in October 2010, replacing Omar Minaya, the directive has mainly been to stop spending. The Wilpons, of course, were bleeding money from the Bernard L. Madoff fiasco, but either way, the spending spree was not working. Alderson would have to get creative and build a talent pipeline while waiting for bad contracts to expire.

Yet the Mets have found few undervalued hidden commodities to make them competitive. Their farm system seems mostly bar-

ren. The young ace Matt Harvey was drafted under Minaya, and Zack Wheeler, who will join the rotation next week, came in a trade for Beltran.

Minaya signed Beltran and gave a chance to R. A. Dickey, the Cy Young Award winner Alderson traded to Toronto last winter. The Mets received a highly regarded Class A starter, Noah Syndergaard, and a Class AAA catcher, Travis d'Arnaud, who has missed significant time in three of the last four seasons with injuries to his back, knee and foot.

On Tuesday the Mets lost to Michael Wacha, the Cardinals' top draft choice last year out of Texas A&M. The Cardinals got the pick from the Angels as compensation for the loss of Albert Pujols in free

agency. Wacha was taken 19th overall; seven spots after the Mets chose the high school shortstop Gavin Cecchini. Cecchini will play for the Class A Brooklyn Cyclones this season.

Losing Pujols looks increasingly shrewd for the Cardinals, who used their savings on contract extensions for Wainwright and catcher Yadier Molina, and a two-year deal for Beltran. All three are likely to be back at Citi Field for the All-Star Game next month. Pujols, now mostly a designated hitter who has eight-plus years left on his 10-year, \$240 million deal, almost certainly will not.

Allen Craig, who replaced Pujols at first base, batted cleanly Wednesday and came in with a .313 average. The Cardinals drafted Craig in the eighth round in 2006, a few months before they beat the Mets and then the Tigers for the championship. Winning soon became a habit for Craig.

"In '07 we went to the Double A championship," said Craig, who homered in a 5-1 loss to the Mets on Wednesday. "In '08 we missed the playoffs, but in 2009 we won the Pacific Coast League. In 2010,

we went back to the championship, and in 2011 we won the World Series."

Craig homered in Game 7 and caught the final out in left field. Within two months, the Cardinals' former scouting director, Jeff Luhnow, was hired to run the Astros by an owner, Jim Crane, who grew up near St. Louis. The Cardinals' model is spreading.

"There's definitely a culture of winning for the guys that have been drafted, and that's something that's been taught to us from the organization and the many great players that have put the uniform on before us," Craig said. "That's something you learn right when you get drafted: there are people before you that have done an outstanding job. You have that to live up to, and the fans expect that, too."

Mets fans cannot reasonably expect the same from their team, given its recent track record, but maybe history offers some hope. The year after Don Draper scoffed at the thought of watching them play, the Mets won the World Series.

All it took was a miracle.

SN.com

Hot Corner: Ryan Braun follows the A-Rod model all the way to public scorn

Published June 12, 2013

By Anthony Witrado Sporting News

Season by season, Ryan Braun meticulously applied the polish much in much the same fashion Alex Rodriguez had before him. It became caked on, coat after coat just as Braun and his handlers wanted.

It became a long process, maybe even grueling over time, but it was all for good reason. Braun gained support and adoration not only from the fans cheering at every turn and defending every mistake, but also from a media contingent either unable or unwilling to see through a façade that masked what was beneath.

And now, the tarnish has settled atop the years and layers of built-up polish. Braun and Rodriguez are the focal points of Major League Baseball's performance-enhancing drug investigation involving the now-closed Biogenesis of America anti-aging clinic in Miami. MLB is looking to net 100-game suspensions for each player, once again putting them under the same microscope they seem to have been on a collision course to sharing for years.

"It's funny because we all used to tease him about being like A-Rod," a former teammate of Braun's said earlier this season. "The image and everything, it's just how he wants to be seen. He's done a good job with it except for all this (PED) stuff."

Braun is from the Los Angeles area and Rodriguez is from Miami, but the Brewer slugger became as tied to South Beach as A-Rod after becoming an All-American at the University of Miami. While Rodriguez was in the midst of superstardom, Braun was developing into one of the game's premier prospects as an amateur, and it was in Miami where the two first met. In the past Braun has called Rodriguez "a friend" and has discussed not only baseball but also business with A-Rod.

When they were drafted Rodriguez as the first overall pick in 1993 and Braun as the fifth overall in 2005 they were each seen as the missing piece to championship contenders: In Seattle, Mariner fans fawned over Rodriguez's minor league numbers and salivated for the day he debuted in their beloved navy and teal. In Milwaukee, Brewer fans couldn't convince management to bring up Braun fast enough.

"I remember that being like a national holiday there," then-Brewers manager and current Kansas City Royals manager Ned Yost said of the day Braun was called up in 2007. "They couldn't wait for the guy. He had pressure on him for sure."

Braun lived up to it, producing a historic rookie season on his way to superstardom and riches.

From his first day in the majors, maybe even before, Braun cultivated his image. He flashed the smile at every camera and fan, he was generous with his time when asked for interviews mainly to national media outlets with greater reach than local and he was never caught up in anything illegal or unsavory.

Braun went out plenty, having a ball in the small Midwestern city where he was a huge fish in a small body of water. He ran Milwaukee the way Green Bay Packers ran their small town and the way A-Rod ran Seattle, then Dallas-Fort Worth and, for a time, the island of Manhattan.

Most important, Braun, like Rodriguez, hit. He hit his way to a National League Championship Series appearance. He hit his way to an MVP award. He hit his way to all the glowing press and adulation that came with it in 2011.

All of this smacked of the Rodriguez blueprint. And eventually went wrong in the same way.

In 2009 it came out that Rodriguez had tested positive for anabolic steroids in 2003. That year, Rodriguez won the American League MVP and home run title while with the Texas Rangers.

In 2011, during the NLCS, Braun tested positive to synthetic testosterone and was given a 50-game suspension. That year he won the NL MVP and led the Brewers to just their second playoff berth since 1982.

Rodriguez admitted he doped, cementing his reputation as a cheater and one of the game's most despised players. Braun fiercely denied he did anything wrong and appealed, eventually winning on a chain-of-custody technicality. Braun then blasted the system that "wronged" him while also curiously saying he supported it.

In their handling of drug tests, the two men differed, although Rodriguez has now hired Braun's legal team. Except for public admissions and denials, they have been one in the same, on-field achievements and crumbling reputations alike.

The smiles are gone. The red carpet photo ops have dried up as they now avoid the spotlight. The access has evaporated. The polish has flaked off.

Rodriguez has long been seen as a phony and overrated among his peers. It was his polish and search for the perfect image others hated, so much so he was voted the game's "phoniest" player last year in an anonymous player poll conducted by Sports Illustrated. Rodriguez's image started to take serious hits after he signed his record 10-year, \$252-million contract with the Rangers in 2000.

Seeing a friend come under that kind of fire, Braun, under the blanket of chic extensions for young players, signed long-term in Milwaukee, leaving millions on the table by not opting to play into free agency. Maybe he believed a smaller market would protect him from scrutiny. For a while, it did.

But in 2011, Braun's positive test took away a chunk of that support, especially within the game. Teammates and former teammates questioned how genuine he was, not only on the field but off of it as well.

Last year an ESPN The Magazine player poll listed Braun third on a list of "the last player you'd ever want to add to your clubhouse."

"Nobody likes Braun," a prominent AL player told the magazine. "He cheated."

But it wasn't just the test. The test was just the reason for players to start talking. During that time, Braun's peers attached the word "phony" to him much the way they had with Rodriguez.

Now both men are prime targets for MLB's latest drug investigation, and together they could be the biggest busts in sports history, at the top of the list with Lance Armstrong. Their Hall of Fame candidacies are possibly ruined as the polish is now rubbed off almost completely, and no amount of smiles or handshakes or branding can get it to stick again.

LEVEL OF EXPECTATION

There have been suspicions about who actually leaked the original Biogenesis investigation news last week, which was first reported by ESPN and said clinic founder Anthony Bosch had agreed to cooperate with MLB's probe. Some believe it was Bosch, others believe it was the league itself.

But a source close to commissioner Bud Selig laid this question on the table during a conversation last week: What good would it do MLB to create a public level of expectation for suspensions?

The answer is none really. Remember, Selig and MLB were made to look like fools after Braun beat his case, a case that should have never become public. Ever. Braun should have tested positive, received his MVP award, won his appeal and started the next season without anyone being the wiser to what his offseason was like. But a leak made it all public knowledge, in turn eventually embarrassing MLB.

MLB does not want another case like this. Braun and Rodriguez are in the league's crosshairs, but if MLB can't convict and give out suspensions like they are spring training per diems, then Selig once again looks terrible for not being able to punish suspected cheaters.

"It just makes no sense for us to want this out," the source said.

PICKING ON PABLO

Tuesday's news that San Francisco Giants third baseman Pablo Sandoval has a strained tendon in his left foot was met with outrage from Giants fans, mainly because they blame Sandoval's weight — his listed weight is 240 pounds, but somewhere closer to 270 is more realistic — for this injury and his injury-prone past.

Manager Bruce Bochy and trainer Dave Groeschner don't agree that the tendon strain is a weight issue, but they agree Sandoval has to get his weight under control.

"With the two weeks off (on the disabled list), that will be a priority for Pablo," Bochy told reporters. "To try and shed a few pounds."

Look, Sandoval is what he is: An overweight (extremely), likeable third baseman with quick hands in the box and soft ones at third base. That is never going to change.

What will change is how the Giants feel about him over the next season and a half. Bochy has met with Sandoval several times over the years regarding his weight, including during in spring training. Sandoval has shown a clear reluctance to concern himself with his size, and once the Giants pay him \$8.2 million in 2014, Sandoval is a free agent.

His indifference to management's desire for Sandoval to get into better shape this may help him avoid certain injuries but not all is spitting in its face. Sandoval will be 28 years old at the end of this contract, and that will make it easy for the Giants to shed Sandoval if he won't shed pounds.

Sandoval is a good player, the MVP of last year's World Series, but the Giants already have their franchise hitter in Buster Posey and with their pitching staff looking weathered these days, they should save the money they'd spend on their Panda and use it on the rotation, because this is at the point of ridiculous.

DEATH BY TWITTER

Chicago Cubs minor leaguer Ian Stewart took to Twitter, predicting his release, implying Cubs manager Dale Sveum doesn't like him and that the front office is incompetent.

I've written how MLB players use Twitter wisely, but this was a case of maybe the stupidest use of the outlet in the sport's history. Stewart deserved to be suspended indefinitely without pay. How does a person not know you can't publically blast your employer without consequences?

That Stewart's Twitter account isn't yet deleted is more stupidity, but then again, the fact that this happened in the first place doesn't speak much in the way of Stewart's penchant for common sense.

In Biogenesis case, 3 players are key

UPDATED JUN 13, 2013 3:11 AM ET

BY JON PAUL MOROSI

Alex Rodriguez and **Ryan Braun** are the biggest stars linked to Major League Baseball's investigation of the now-defunct Biogenesis wellness clinic.

But for the purposes of the 2013 season, they aren't the most important.

Of all the names to emerge in reports about Biogenesis, only three are key contributors on contending teams: **Detroit Tigers** shortstop **Jhonny Peralta**, **Texas Rangers** right fielder **Nelson Cruz** and **Oakland A's** right-hander **Bartolo Colon**.

We know suspensions would have profound impacts on the legacies of MLB commissioner Bud Selig and any players involved — particularly if one is Braun, the five-time All-Star who has maintained his innocence since a failed drug test in October 2011. But Braun's **Milwaukee Brewers** are irrelevant in the National League Central, 15 games out of first place. They are bad with him. They would be bad without him.

As for A-Rod, do you *really* think the **Yankees** want him back?

It's much different for the Tigers, Rangers and A's. Peralta is a likely All-Star, with an .858 OPS that is the best among American League shortstops. Colon leads the Oakland rotation with eight wins and ranks among the AL's top 10 in ERA. No right fielder in the major leagues has hit more home runs than Cruz (15).

Each of their teams has a reasonable chance to win the World Series. With the non-waiver trade deadline looming July 31, should the general managers of those clubs deal for players they may not need? Or stand pat and hope that there isn't enough evidence — from unknown witnesses — to issue suspensions, which may not come for weeks or months?

A 50-game ban (for a first offense) issued in August or September would be disastrous, because quality replacements become harder to find as the season goes on. Players must clear waivers to be traded after July 31, which limits the number of options. And anyone acquired after Aug. 31 would be ineligible for the postseason roster.

Oakland's Billy Beane might be in a less complicated position than Detroit's Dave Dombrowski or Texas' Jon Daniels, if only because adding a starter is almost always a good strategy at the trade deadline, no matter how many good pitchers a team appears to have. Beane also has 23-year-old prospect Sonny Gray at Triple-A Sacramento, with numbers that suggest he's ready for the majors.

It's probably not practical for the Tigers or Rangers to acquire a comparably talented (and expensive) everyday player as insurance for Peralta or Cruz, *in case* either is suspended. Yet, it would seem strange — and potentially reckless — to not have a solid backup plan. The ideal solutions would be young, cheap players who would be under club control for 2014, too. But those players can be hard to acquire.

Detroit is in a particularly unfavorable position because of (a) the steep offensive drop-off Peralta's absence would create and (b) the importance of having a trusted defender at shortstop in September and October. The Tigers' current backup shortstop, **Ramon Santiago**, is batting only .163. Among the Tigers' alternatives in the minor leagues, **Danny Worth** just returned from the disabled list and Argenis Diaz hasn't played in the majors since 2010.

The Tigers may need to conserve their resources to trade for the closer they obviously need in light of **Jose Valverde**'s recent struggles. When asked this week about the possibility of seeking additional shortstop depth because of Peralta's uncertain status, Dombrowski told FOXSports.com, "At this point, we are happy with our own situation."

The Rangers, meanwhile, could shift **David Murphy** from left field to right and move an infielder (potentially Jurickson Profar or **Ian Kinsler**) to the outfield. Engel Beltre is an excellent defensive outfielder at Triple-A. But those contingencies are far from ideal. Cruz would be a huge loss. In a fluid Rangers' lineup, his 61 starts in right are tied with shortstop **Elvis Andrus** for the most at any one position. And Cruz is a vital power source in the No. 5 spot.

You might compare the uncertainty surrounding Peralta and Cruz to that of chronically injured players who could break down at any time. But this is different. With an ailing player, the general manager feels as if he understands the circumstances: medical records, opinions from athletic trainers, intimate knowledge of the player's pain tolerance, close and informative communication with the player himself.

Here, the general managers involved have virtually *none* of the relevant information.

According to terms of the joint drug agreement between MLB and the players' union, team officials aren't supposed to know about their players' positive tests during the appeals process. For example: Although rumors existed beforehand, MLB didn't formally call the **San Francisco Giants** to inform them of Melky Cabrera's suspension last August until the morning it was announced — after the unsuccessful appeal.

That was after the July 31 non-waiver trade deadline — and after the Giants (fortuitously) acquired outfielder **Hunter Pence** from Philadelphia.

So while the primary intrigue remains *if* players will be suspended, the timing is a crucial consideration. What if a player loses his appeal right before the postseason — or, even worse, the World Series? How uncomfortable would it be for MLB to issue a suspension on the eve of its signature event?

Also, Peralta, Cruz and Colon could be eligible for free agency after the season. What impact would a suspension have on their market values — and the chances of receiving qualifying offers from their teams?

Those questions may not be as premature as they sound. Selig wouldn't be cooperating with Bosch unless he believed there was a good chance suspensions could be the end result. At least, that is what some in the industry are speculating. They don't know. And neither do the GMs, for whom not knowing is a very frightening feeling.

FOXSports.com

Puig's rage in brawl a bad sign?

UPDATED JUN 13, 2013 5:53 AM ET

BY KEN ROSENTHAL

LOS ANGELES

Upon further review regarding the **Dodgers-Diamondbacks** melee, I'm more worried about Yasiel Puig, less worried about **Zack Greinke** and astonished that baseball doesn't ban bench-clearing brawls.

I'm more worried about Puig because he was out of control during the fight, renewing questions about his makeup that date back to his time in Cuba; he seemingly recovered from a strained right shoulder in record time, making a strong throw home from right field and drilling a single after entering Wednesday night's game in the 12th inning.

I'm less worried about Greinke because he acted out of obligation to his teammates by retaliating and also took care to avoid getting hurt, declining to charge the mound after the Diamondbacks' **Ian Kennedy** hit him, then steering clear of the ensuing brawl.

And I'm astonished that baseball allows such nonsense to continue when leagues such as the NBA and NHL have taken clear steps to prevent fights from escalating — the NBA by instituting a rule that players cannot leave the bench, the NHL by penalizing the first man to intervene (third man in).

Baseball delayed announcing discipline for the Dodgers-Diamondbacks embarrassment until Thursday, taking an extra day to sort through the mess. The questions about Puig, Greinke and the sport, however, aren't going away.

* * *

The Diamondbacks were still talking about Puig's actions Wednesday, saying that the Dodgers were shouting at him, "No! Not you!" as he kept charging back into the melee.

Nine games into his career, Puig is already that valuable. The Dodgers were fearful of losing him to an ejection (which happened) and a suspension (which almost certainly will follow).

Puig, though, was in a rage.

Kennedy had hit him the previous inning, grazing his nose with a 92-mph fastball. According to several Diamondbacks, Puig kept shouting, "Yo soy Cubano! — "I am a Cuban!" — as he drifted in and out of the fight, at one point landing a haymaker on the back of **Eric Hinske's** head.

One Dodger pointed out that Puig's heated response was hardly inappropriate, considering that he was hit in the face. Puig is 22. He has been in the US less than a year. To expect him to act like Derek Jeter is unfair.

When I asked Dodgers team president Stan Kasten if Puig's conduct concerned him, he replied, "Not a bit. He's a kid who plays with a lot of energy and passion — which we love."

Manager Don Mattingly had a similar reaction.

"The one thing we've learned with Yasiel is that there's no half-speed," Mattingly said. "It's fast. It's hard. It's all the time. I guess I'm really not surprised that anything that happens with Yasiel happens in a fast manner."

Dodgers players say that Puig has been a model teammate since joining the club on June 3, playing hard, showing humility. The team also features numerous veterans who can help him through the maturing process and cultural transition.

Still, rival executives questioned Puig's makeup even before he signed his seven-year, \$42 million contract with the Dodgers last June 28. Puig did little to allay those concerns when he was arrested in late April for reckless driving, speeding and driving without proof of insurance when police said he drove 97 mph in a 50-mph zone in Chattanooga, Tenn.

It was not his first brush with the law.

Puig was banned in Cuba during the 2011 season for disciplinary reasons, and some interpreted that penalty as related to his attempts to defect. Cuban baseball expert and author Peter Bjarkman, however, told USA Today that the suspension occurred after Puig was arrested on a shoplifting charge while playing in a tournament in Rotterdam, Holland — and that his attempts to defect stemmed from his ban.

Perhaps Puig's conduct Tuesday night was simply an isolated and understandable reaction to a career-threatening beaming. Or perhaps it was a glimpse into an explosive personality, a sign of further trouble ahead.

* * *

On Tuesday, I wrote that Greinke — after getting his left collarbone broken in a fight with the **Padres' Carlos Quentin** in April — was foolish to risk injury again by hitting Diamondbacks catcher **Miguel Montero**.

On Wednesday, Mattingly all but said that Greinke had no choice to respond for Kennedy hitting Puig in the face.

“To be honest, if he doesn’t do that, he loses a lot of respect in that clubhouse,” Mattingly said. “It’s more dangerous for him not to do that than it is for him to do that.”

Sounds extreme, but Greinke was simply following baseball’s code for protecting teammates — a code to which he faithfully adheres even as a \$147-million free agent.

Some Diamondbacks believe that Greinke should have been ejected, and crew chief Brian Gorman acknowledged afterward that Greinke hit Montero “on purpose.” The umpires, who can use their discretion to eject a pitcher under such circumstances, simply issued warnings to both sides, apparently believing — as the Dodgers did — that the Montero plunking settled the matter.

It should have.

Kennedy was not wrong to pitch Puig inside — that approach, in fact, might be the best way to get Puig out. The Dodgers’ objection was that Kennedy flirted with danger by missing up and in. Greinke took action, one player said, to ensure that Kennedy did not get so careless again.

In 2011, Greinke was a member of a **Brewers** team that kept throwing inside — with considerable success — against the **Cardinals' Albert Pujols** and **Matt Holliday**. But the dynamic changed after the Brewers’ **Takashi Saito** hit Pujols in the left hand, prompting the Cardinals’ **Jason Motte** to respond by hitting **Ryan Braun** in the back.

The Brewers’ pitchers had to cool it, lest their own hitters get hurt.

“Tony (La Russa) was the best at never starting it but always ending it,” Dodgers outfielder **Skip Schumaker** said of his former manager with the Cardinals.

“If he felt a guy was doing (questionable) stuff — especially up and in, not so much in — he was going to end it. He didn’t want anyone getting hurt. If our guy threw up and in, Tony would be pissed.”

Greinke surely remembered the exchange with the Cardinals, how it forced the Brewers’ pitchers to stop pitching so aggressively inside. That apparently was his intent when he hit

Montero. But Kennedy failed to get the memo, hitting Greinke in the upper shoulder, receiving an automatic ejection, earning a near-certain suspension.

In the heat of the moment, Greinke's reaction was telling. Like Puig, he could have suffered a serious head injury if the pitch had been an inch or two higher. But Greinke, rather than display aggressive body language or issue a verbal response — the way he did after hitting Quentin in San Diego — simply proceeded to first base.

Evidently, he is getting smarter.

* * *

Mattingly, in his pregame news conference Wednesday, had reporters laughing out loud when he spoke about the absurdity of relievers sprinting in from the bullpen to participate in brawls when “you can't even get them to move around during BP (batting practice).”

When you think about it, the actual brawls are absurd, too.

In a game already beset by injuries, nothing good can come out of 50 players — not to mention coaches and managers — engaging in a violent scrum. Yet, baseball allows such behavior to continue, acting as if it's still 1950 even though many players are now multi-million-dollar assets.

Fail.

“I'm sure the rules will change,” Mattingly said. “I know baseball doesn't want to see this.”

One stroke of the pen, that's all it will take. Charge the mound, and you're suspended for 10 games without pay. Leave the dugout — or bullpen — and you're down for one, just like an NBA player who leaves his team's bench during an altercation.

I'm not talking about a rule against pitching inside; that's part of the game, a part that the players mostly police themselves, with occasional help from the umpires. I'm talking about eliminating bench-clearing brawls, and the dangers that they pose, once and for all.

Tuesday night was ugly — unnecessarily ugly.

Enough already. Make it stop.

FOXSports.com

Stupidity reigns in 'code', brawl

UPDATED JUN 12, 2013 11:37 PM ET

BY KEN ROSENTHAL

LOS ANGELES

Don't ask me who was right in the wild bench-clearing brawl between the **Dodgers** and **Diamondbacks** on Tuesday night. Pretty much everyone was wrong, and not just a little wrong, either.

I just want to know, when does the stupidity stop?

We all understand baseball's unwritten code of retaliation; it's part of the game. But Tuesday night was an example of the code on steroids, or at least elevated testosterone.

Game situation, gentlemen?

Does anyone even pay attention to the score anymore?

Diamondbacks right-hander **Ian Kennedy** hit the Dodgers' Yasiel Puig with two strikes and two outs in the sixth, bringing the tying run to the plate. The other two drillings — Zack Greinke of D-backs catcher **Miguel Montero**, Kennedy of Greinke — occurred with the score tied in the seventh.

And that's not the half of it.

Greinke, after getting his left collarbone broken in a fight with the **Padres' Carlos Quentin** in April, was foolish to risk injury again, particularly in reaction to Kennedy's unintentional beaming of Puig.

Kennedy was even dumber, twice enraging the Dodgers by twice throwing toward their heads. First, he threw a ball that grazed Puig's nose, inadvertently. Later, he nailed Greinke in the upper shoulder to exact revenge for Montero, triggering a near-riot.

"If you can't pitch inside without hitting someone in the head, then you shouldn't pitch inside," Dodgers manager Don Mattingly said.

Amen, but not even Donnie Baseball stood above the fray in a game the Dodgers ended up winning, 5-3. No, Mattingly wrestled Diamondbacks bench coach Alan Trammell to the ground in the middle of the brawl, an incident the manager later said he couldn't remember. Two of the nicest guys in the game, both in their 50s, going at it like kids on a playground. No one's finest hour.

Luckily — incredibly — no player, coach or manager on either team appeared to get hurt.

The madness also included:

- Dodgers hitting coach Mark McGwire yelling at Diamondbacks manager Kirk Gibson, as well as screaming at and grabbing third-base coach Matt Williams by the jersey.
- Dodgers reliever **J.P. Howell** slamming Diamondbacks assistant hitting coach Turner Ward against a railing by the camera well as if it were a WWE turnbuckle.
- Puig landing a haymaker on D-Backs first baseman **Eric Hinske**'s head, and injured Dodgers pitchers **Josh Beckett** and **Chris Capuano** inviting suspensions by taking the field while on the disabled list.

"It was like 25 against 72," Montero said. "All the DL guys were out there, too."

The umpires were even more overmatched.

"There were four of us and what, 60 of them?" said crew chief Brian Gorman, who was umpiring first base.

In the end, Gorman's crew issued six ejections — to the Dodgers' McGwire, Puig and reliever **Ronald Belisario**, and the Diamondbacks' Gibson, Kennedy and Ward. Others also could receive discipline, Gorman said, after the commissioner's office reviews the video. MLB is expected to announce discipline Thursday.

McGwire and Puig were "instigating," according to third base umpire Larry Vanover, while Belisario was "out of control." Gibson and Kennedy received automatic ejections for Kennedy hitting Greinke after warnings were issued. The umps also viewed Ward as an instigator, even though he got pummeled by Howell.

"He was grabbing guys, being aggressive in the fight," Gorman said, though he acknowledged, "it's hard not to, when they go after you."

The benches initially cleared after Greinke hit Montero, but no punches were thrown. That's where this whole thing should have ended, the usual eye-for-eye exchange complete.

Alas, there is history between these teams that date back two years, when the Dodgers' **Clayton Kershaw** hit **Gerardo Parra** the day after Parra — in Kershaw's view — had showboated a home run off reliever Hung-Chih Kuo.

There also is history with Greinke — the recent history with Quentin, known to every opposing player. And while it's admirable that Greinke defends his teammates, the Dodgers didn't sign him for \$147 million to administer cowboy justice. They signed him to pitch like an ace.

Greinke said afterward that his seven-inning outing was "maybe" his best of the season. He ran the bases after Kennedy hit him, but Mattingly didn't allow him to come out for the eighth. The "extra stuff," as Greinke called it, contributed to the manager's decision to lift him after 98 pitches.

I understand why the Dodgers were upset about what happened to Puig — "You don't throw at anybody's head," left fielder **Skip Schumaker** said. "I don't care what the situation is, that's a dangerous play with all the concussions now."

I also understand that Greinke retaliated properly, hitting Montero in the back, not higher. But Greinke couldn't have waited, couldn't have allowed a reliever to hit a Diamondbacks player in a less critical spot?

Heck, maybe it should never even have come to that.

The umpires, in Gibson's view, could have issued warnings after Greinke twice threw inside at Montero earlier in the at-bat. But Gorman said the umps could not "factor in" Greinke's history, could not determine his intent.

So, one thing led to another.

Gibson said that he understood why the Dodgers were "mad," made it clear that he did not order Kennedy to throw at Greinke, uttered the usual bromides about pitching inside and balls getting away.

Kennedy acknowledged trying to send Greinke "a message," but said he only wanted to go inside, not hit him.

"I didn't think it was right, what he did to Miggy (Montero)," Kennedy said.

Well, Ian, the Dodgers didn't think it was right for you to hit Puig in the face.

No one was right, not on this crazy night.

I keep looking at the video, and can't find the adult in the room.

ESPN.com

Wednesday, June 12, 2013

Harper, Trout ... or Machado?

By Buster Olney

One of baseball's most popular debates in the past year has involved two players: Mike Trout or Bryce Harper?

Harper is perceived to have more power, Trout more speed. Trout is thought to have more range, Harper the better arm.

But it's time that the conversation over the sport's best young player be changed. It must include a third player -- the Orioles' Manny Machado. In the year that Harper was drafted No. 1 overall, Machado was chosen two picks later, and the 20-year-old has continued to be overshadowed by Harper and Trout. He arrived in the big leagues a few months after the two last season, and hasn't had the sort of attention that the other two have had.

This season, however, Machado has blossomed, hitting .315 in his first 65 games, with 34 extra-base hits (including 27 doubles) and 41 runs. Already, Machado is regarded as one of baseball's best defenders on the left side of the infield.

I informally polled a bunch of talent evaluators around the sport about how they would rank the three players, and based on their answers, Machado already is viewed as a player comparable to the other two -- and there already is concern over Harper's ability to stay healthy.

Total number of votes: 9. Points are based on 3-2-1 system. Here are the results:

Trout: 22

Machado: 17 1/2

Harper: 14 1/2

Some of the comments:

AL evaluator: "I would keep Machado at No. 3 only because the other two guys are center fielders, middle of the diamond capable; so their premium position value keeps them at the top of the list for me."

NL evaluator: "Over the long haul, I think Trout's body composition could diminish some of his speed and explosiveness. I know this is a small, nitpicky distinction. I actually think Machado is the most skilled of the three. The other two are just such phenomenal strength/speed athletes."

AL official: "I still take Trout first because he just impacts the game at another level on offense, bases and defense (despite this year's numbers which I think will reverse again). Machado is really good and actually I think is the best bet of the three for the longest and most productive career -- the best bet for the Hall of Fame because of the length of career and numbers he'll pile up and there are so many directions he can go in as he ages -- right side of infield, outfield, etc. But I think Trout contributes more wins in his best years than Machado in his best years. ... Somebody has to be third and it's Harper for me (as it would have been last year) because of the effort in his game and long-term durability concerns."

NL official: "It's closer between Harper and Machado than it was in the past, but Harper is still so young and talented it gives me pause to put even Trout ahead of him. However, Trout impacts the game in so many ways and is so good he's the best player in baseball right now and could be for the next 10 years. Harper has a higher upside, if not less certainty than Machado, and given their ages and all the development that remains all this ranking is about at this point is upside."

NL executive: "I'd have Machado at No. 1 because he is more graceful, with flowing athletic skills -- poised and athletic easy-action skills are able to make adjustments as required for longevity, like Jeter and early A-Rod, and like Chipper Jones' graceful swing."

"Trout and Harper are both physical strength guys who have linebacker mentality. They may go through injuries and also may struggle later (5-7 years from now) like Kirk Gibson, Bo Jackson. Gibson played as a regular from age 26-32 and then his decline started. Bo had a football injury. [Grady Sizemore](#) is similar to a Harper. The mentality to be overly physical hurts players, and outfielders have more wear and tear physically."

Notables

- Harper's knee has been deemed to be [structurally sound](#).
- On Tuesday's podcast, Atlanta GM Frank Wren talked [about the legend](#) that is [Evan Gattis](#), and the forthcoming decision facing the Braves with their rotation: They've got [six guys for five spots](#).
- Just before [Gerrit Cole](#) was about to throw the first pitch of his major league career, the Pirates threw the ball around the infield, in the usual way, and [Pedro Alvarez](#) approached the mound with the baseball. Cole had a question for him.

"He asked me if [Gregor] Blanco was a bunter," Alvarez wrote in a text message, "and all I said was 'Yes' and that I was going to be playing in on the bunt, and not to worry about covering the third base side."

"I made it a point to not say anything along the lines of, 'Hey, you got this!' or 'Hey, same

game!' I think saying things like that only solidifies that it is a big deal that he's pitching in the big leagues. ... I wanted him to know that his teammates trusted him and that he belongs here. I was going to treat it as if [A.J. Burnett](#) or [Wandy Rodriguez](#) or any other pitcher was on the mound."

Cole struck out Blanco on three pitches, all fastballs -- 96 mph, 97 and 99 -- and then he kept pumping strikes. His command of his secondary stuff was ordinary, but Cole's fastball served as his equalizer, getting him ahead in the count or allowing him to catch up.

Pirates GM Neal Huntington -- who has so much invested in Cole, in organizational dollars and in hope -- said that watching debuts of all players coming up from the minors is fun. "What was most rewarding was watching how he did things," Huntington wrote in an email, noting how Cole pounded the strike zone. Cole's "second pitch of the game was a fastball inside, and his first secondary pitch was a right-hander against right-hander change-up to the reigning MVP," [Buster Posey](#).

Alvarez's assessment: "Awesome. ... He competed on the mound and used his defense. He stayed within himself and didn't try to do too much. Not to mention his great at-bats at the plate, as well.

"I was impressed at how poised and in control he was the entire outing. ... I think a lot of hard throwers with his kind of stuff might get caught up in running up the strikeout total, but he certainly did not."

From ESPN Stats & Information, how Cole won:

- A. He threw 78 percent strikes with his fastball (seven swings-and-misses, 16 called strikes).
- B. He averaged 96.2 mph (would be highest average among starting pitchers) and reached 99.4 with his fastball, the hardest fastball thrown by a starting pitcher this season.
- C. He stuck with it -- 79 percent fastballs, which kept hitters off his other pitches. Opponents went 0-for-5 in at-bats ending with his changeup and slider.

He is the first Pirates starter to win his MLB debut since 2005 ([Paul Maholm](#)). His start also vaguely resembles the first start of fellow No. 1 [Stephen Strasburg](#), who went 7 innings (Cole went 6 1/3), and gave up the same two earned runs. The big difference is Strasburg whiffed 14 batters, whereas Cole struck out two. Neither issued a walk, both got a win.

Cole also drove in the game's first two runs in his first MLB at-bat, the first pitcher drafted No. 1 overall to get an RBI in his MLB debut (of the 14 to make the majors).

[Cole shined](#), writes Bill Brink. This debut was [special for many reasons](#), writes Ron Cook. Cole's coronation [could come in time](#), writes Dejan Kovacevic.

The Pirates are 38-26, the first time they've won at least 38 of their first 64 since 1992. Seasons

in past 50 years that included at least 38 wins in the first 64 games for Pittsburgh show some big gaps. From Justin Havens of ESPN Stats & Info, those years include 1992, 1991, 1990, then 1975, 1972 and 1971.

- The Giants lost, and had concern about [Marco Scutaro](#), who [may have suffered tendon damage](#), as Henry Schulman writes.
- There was a lot of [stuff going on even before](#) the Diamondbacks-Dodgers game Tuesday night: Arizona suffered a tough hit to its bullpen, with the loss of [Matt Reynolds](#), and [Brandon League](#) was replaced [as the Dodgers' closer](#).

But then the game started and the two sides [started scrapping](#). [Yasiel Puig](#) got hit, somewhere on the shoulder, then in the face; Arizona catcher [Miguel Montero](#) got drilled in the back by [Zack Greinke](#), after repeated attempts; and then [Ian Kennedy](#) nailed Greinke just below the neck.

There were a lot of violations of baseball's unwritten rules along the way, and here are a few:

1. As Greinke seemingly attempted retaliation at Montero, he took multiple shots at him, missing before his final pitch. A lot of players feel like a pitcher gets one shot at retaliation and if he misses, well, it's on him -- and the fact that Greinke kept throwing at Montero is why the Diamondbacks were upset. (As I wrote at the time of the [Carlos Quentin](#)-Greinke incident, Zack does not shy away from these situations; he embraces them.)
2. It's really kind of silly that Greinke wasn't ejected after hitting Montero, because everybody in the ballpark knew it was on purpose.
3. Kennedy's response to Greinke -- a fastball near his head -- was really dangerous, in how close it came to hitting him in the noggin.

And there is one more rule that will probably be addressed when discipline comes down (and presumably, Kennedy will get the most significant suspension): Players on the disabled list are not supposed to go on the field during a fight, and some Dodgers violated this.

- [Max Scherzer](#) continues to dominate hitters, and he overpowered the Royals Tuesday [to run his record to 9-0](#).

Per the Elias Sports Bureau, that's now 13 straights starts this season with at least six strikeouts. The folks with the most consecutive starts with six or more K's in AL history? "They" are all [Pedro Martinez](#):

2000 Pedro Martinez: 29

1999 Pedro Martinez: 15

2001 Pedro Martinez: 14

2013 Max Scherzer: 13

- [Ian Stewart](#) was suspended without pay after he tweeted [a bunch of stuff](#).

From Paul Sullivan's story:

The saga began late Monday night when Stewart answered a fan's question about when he would return to the Cubs with two words: "Probably never."

That quickly escalated into some perceived whining about his status in Iowa: "I meant they might as well release me since I have no shot at a call-up."

Explaining why he thought the Cubs didn't want him up, he mentioned manager Dale Sveum: "I think Dale doesn't like me and he's running the show." He also tweeted the Cubs "are done with me" and are "going to let me ROTT (sic) in AAA all season and then non tender me after." He told one fan it was "more fun" in Triple A, and also re-tweeted someone who wrote the Cubs had "terrible leadership."

The Cubs were not surprised Stewart vented on Twitter, but the shots at Sveum were particularly galling to Epstein.

"It's pretty obvious that it's not appropriate to criticize your manager in your organization on Twitter," he said.

Sveum said it was "unfortunate that people have to vent their frustrations through social media," calling it "unprofessional."

As for whether he disliked Stewart, Sveum responded: "I liked him enough to be in his court to bring him back. Everybody doesn't (always) like me. That's the way it is."

In general: Tweeting about his frustration makes less sense than simply playing well and forcing the hand of the big league team in this situation.

- Encouraged by what they saw Monday, the [Rays are speeding](#) up David Price's timetable.

Moves, deals and decisions

1. [Jose Reyes](#) is leaving today for his injury rehab assignment, as mentioned [within this notebook](#).
2. The Mariners [called up Mike Zunino](#).
3. The Nationals traded [a pitcher](#).
4. [Alexi Ogando](#) will remain in the Texas rotation if he [gets a clean bill of health](#), says Nolan Ryan.
5. Any improvements for the Yankees will [likely come from within](#).
6. [Michael Young continues to hit leadoff](#) for the Phillies.
7. The Royals [signed a top pick](#).

8. The Cardinals are close to a [deal with their No. 1 pick](#).
9. [Tyler Colvin](#) was [recalled from Triple-A](#).

Dings and dents

1. [Yoanis Cespedes](#) left the game with [hamstring tightness](#), as Susan Slusser writes.
2. The Tigers have no idea when [Octavio Dotel will be back](#), writes George Sipple.
3. [Aaron Hicks](#) landed on [the disabled list](#).
4. [Charlie Morton](#) is getting [the ball Thursday](#).
5. [Clay Buchholz](#) could [start Sunday](#).
6. [Chris Coghlan](#) is going [to be out a while](#).
7. An injured Angels reliever has [been told to rest](#).
8. [Scott Van Slyke](#) became [the latest Dodgers player](#) to go on the disabled list.

Tuesday's games

1. [CC Sabathia](#) struggled [near the place he grew up](#).
2. [Michael Wacha](#) picked [up his first victory](#), writes Derrick Goold.
3. Cory Kluber stomped out [the Indians' losing streak](#), writes Paul Hoynes.
4. [Aaron Harang](#) pitched [a beauty](#).
5. CarGo [did it again](#).

AL West

- The [Rangers miss Ian Kinsler](#), writes Evan Grant.
- The Astros have [lost six straight](#).

AL Central

- [Justin Morneau](#) came [through in the clutch](#), as Mike Berardino writes.
- The Royals lead the [AL in ERA](#), writes Tod Palmer.
- The White Sox made a [lot of mistakes](#).

AL East

- New father [Miguel Gonzalez](#) was [outstanding against the Angels](#), writes Dan Connolly.
- [Jon Lester](#) had [a bad day](#).
- The Rays are [still angry](#) with [John Lackey](#).
- [Matt Joyce](#) has [been on a roll](#).

NL West

- Here's a look inside the [Padres' draft preparation](#), from Corey Brock.

NL Central

- [Tony Cingrani](#) beat the Cubs, but he [may not be around long](#).
- The Reds have won 11 straight at Wrigley Field. Per Elias: It's the first time they've won at least 11 straight road games versus one opponent since 1956-57, when they won 12 in a row at Pittsburgh (team record is 15 straight versus Phillies from 1922-24).
- [Carlos Beltran](#) has thrived [since leaving the Mets](#), writes Jim Baumbach.

NL East

- [Giancarlo Stanton](#) was "[the man](#)" for the Marlins.
- Daniel Murphy's best position [continues to be: hitter](#).
- The Braves are having a [frustrating road trip](#).
- [Dan Haren](#) was [blasted](#).
- Stephen Strasburg is set to [come back Sunday](#).
- The upper Midwest continues to [wreck the Phillies](#).

Other stuff

- [Robinson Cano](#) says there's "[no chance](#)" he'll pick [Billy Butler](#) for the Home Run Derby.
 - The Brewers have a whole [lot invested](#) in [Ryan Braun](#), writes Tyler Kepner.
 - The debate over the old Tiger Stadium [site continues](#).
 - The Rangers and Indians [worked around a sinkhole](#), as T.R. Sullivan writes.
- And today will be better than yesterday.

As top prospects arrive, question for Rays is: When is Wil Myers coming to the Show?

By [Jay Jaffe](#)

June 12, 2013

On Tuesday night, Wil Myers homered for the third time in four games and the ninth time in his past 19 games. That would be great news for the Rays — if he were doing it for them. Instead the 2012 *Baseball America* Minor League Player of the Year is still toiling for the team's Triple-A Durham affiliate, and it's not clear how soon he'll reach the majors.

Back in December, the Rays acquired the 22-year-old Myers from the Royals in [the winter's most controversial deal](#), a six-player blockbuster that sent pitchers James Shields and Wade Davis to Kansas City. From the outset, it appeared likely that Myers' budget-minded new employers would wait to promote the slugging outfielder so as to prevent him accruing enough service time this year to become a "Super Two" — a player eligible for arbitration, and thus his first big raise, before he had completed three major league seasons. The savings for a small-market team such as the Rays is hardly trivial, with the *Tampa Bay Times*' [Mark Topkin](#) recently citing an industry estimate of \$10 million in Myers' case. Teammate David Price is a Super Two who made \$4.35 million last year, his first year of eligibility, and is making \$10.1125 million this year. Put two more rounds of raises on top of that and you have a player whom few believe will still be in Tampa Bay by the end of his eligibility.

Per the most recent collective bargaining agreement, the top 22 percent of players with between two and three years of service time (up from 17 percent in the previous CBA) reach Super Two status every winter, though pinning down the exact date is tricky because teams do make decisions around it, affecting the number of players in the pool. With regards to Mets pitching prospect Zack Wheeler, who's said to be arriving next week, ESPN's [Adam Rubin](#) received estimates from front office executives calling mid-to-late June "usually safe," with June 11 "mostly safe" and June 20 "super safe."

Thus it appears to be About That Time, and for confirmation, it's worth noting that Tuesday marked not only [the callup of the Pirates' Gerrit Cole](#) but also the Mariners' Mike Zunino, the third pick of last year's draft. Wheeler appears likely to debut on June 18, when the Mets have a

doubleheader with the Braves. As for Myers, on June 8, former Reds and Nationals general manager and current Sirius/XM radio host Jim Bowden estimated [via Twitter](#) that the promotion "should happen within the next 10 days."

After a 2011 season in which he was hampered by a knee laceration while adjusting to a position change from catcher to outfield, Myers broke out in 2012, hitting .314/.387/.600 with 37 homers split between the Royals' Double-A and Triple-A affiliates; in the Pacific Coast League, he was the second-youngest regular at 21. Perhaps because he battled minor wrist and foot injuries earlier this spring, as of May 21, he was hitting a measly .244/.341/.372 with four homers in 185 plate appearances. He's caught fire since then — .358/.393/.790 with nine homers in 89 plate appearances, not to mention five steals — lifting his overall line to a respectable .283/.358/.515. After early concerns about his ability to hit upper-level righties, he's up to .270/.349/.486 in 212 PA against them.

Financial concerns aside, the major sticking point with regards to his promotion is that the Rays' need isn't so obvious at the moment. Their offense, which ranked 11th in the league last year at 4.30 runs per game, is currently third at 5.02 per game, a number all the more impressive given the pitcher-friendliness of Tropicana Field. The team is getting reasonably strong production from Matt Joyce (.258/.343/.500 while playing both outfield corner spots), Ben Zobrist (.274/.365/.402 splitting time between second base and rightfield) and Kelly Johnson (.257/.321/.471 with 10 homers while playing mostly leftfield). The weak link is designated hitter Luke Scott (.215/.320/.336), but Tampa Bay appears reluctant to mothball a player making \$2.75 million, slightly more than Johnson or Joyce. Though he's 35 years old, Scott does actually have a minor league option remaining, but as a player with five years of service time, he has to consent to being sent down, and could opt for free agency instead.

Ignoring the small-sample-driven weirdness via which the lefty-swinging Scott is for once hitting lefties well but flailing against righties, the righty-swinging Myers could fit into a DH platoon. But if the Rays were to risk Super Two status for Myers, it would almost certainly not be to bring him up as a part-timer. Thus it looks like he's still at least a week away — towards the outer edge of the Super Two cutoff — from being promoted, and perhaps longer. Without an injury or other obvious roster move, he'll be — [to paraphrase Bob Dylan](#) — stuck inside the minors with the Durham blues again.

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DEALS

Baseball

► American League

Boston Red Sox: Recalled P Alfredo Aceves from Pawtucket (International/AAA). Optioned P Jose De La Torre to Pawtucket.

Chicago White Sox: Signed SS Tim Anderson to a minor league contract and assigned him to Bristol (Appalachian/Rookie).

Cleveland Indians: Signed P Trevor Frank, C Shane Rowland, IF Grant Fink and IF Mike Giuffre to minor league contracts.

Tampa Bay Rays: Signed P John Farrell.

► National League

Chicago Cubs: Placed P Zach Putnam on the 15-day disabled list. Recalled P Brooks Raley from Iowa (Pacific Coast/AAA).

Colorado Rockies: Signed P Jonathan Gray. Designated OF Eric Young Jr. for assignment. Recalled P Chris Volstad from Colorado Springs (Pacific Coast/AAA).

San Diego Padres: Recalled OF Jaff Decker from Tucson (Pacific Coast/AAA). Placed OF Cameron Maybin on the 15-day disabled list.

St. Louis Cardinals: Signed P Ian McKinney, P Jimmy Reed, SS Chris Rivera, OF Devante Lacy, P Blake McKnight and P Kevin Herget to minor league contracts.

Washington Nationals: Purchased the contract of P Ross Ohlendorf from Syracuse (International/AAA). Optioned P Nathan Karns to Harrisburg (Eastern/AA). Transferred P Christian Garcia to the 60-day disabled list.