



Clips

(May 31, 2014)

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FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

A's jump to early lead, beat Angels, 9-5

MIKE DIGIOVANNA

KEY MOMENT: Trailing, 9-5, the Angels put two on with one out in the seventh inning for Albert Pujols, who could have cut the lead to one with a home run. But A's reliever Dan Otero got Pujols to ground into a fielder's choice, and setup man Luke Gregerson came on to strike out David Freese, snuffing out the threat.

AT THE PLATE: Oakland third baseman Josh Donaldson hit a solo homer to right in the second, a run-scoring single to right in the third and a two-run homer to center in the fifth. He is batting .285 with 15 homers and 45 runs batted in. Mike Trout hit a solo homer to left-center, and Howie Kendrick lined a two-run homer to left in the third for the Angels. C.J. Cron pulled the Angels to within 9-5 with a two-run double to left-center in the sixth.

ON THE MOUND: The two-thirds-of-an-inning, 37-pitch start by Garrett Richards matched the shortest of his career and the shortest by an Angel since Jered Weaver did not record an out against the Yankees on May 28, 2012. Brandon Moss' first-inning grand slam was the first slam Richards has allowed in his career. Left-hander Wade LeBlanc gave up four runs and six hits, but by throwing 94 pitches in 6 1/3 innings, he preserved the bullpen for the weekend. It was the longest relief outing by an Angels left-hander since Pat Clements (6 2/3 innings) in 1985.

REHAB REPORT: Josh Hamilton (bone bruise left thumb) resumed his rehab stint with triple-A Salt Lake on Friday, playing seven innings in left field and going two for four with a run against Tacoma. Barring a setback, he is expected to join the Angels on Tuesday in Houston. . . . Hector Santiago, demoted to Salt Lake on May 21, showed better command in his second triple-A start Friday, allowing one run and four hits in 5 1/3 innings, striking out seven and walking three.

EXTRA BASES: Reliever Sean Burnett, who suffered a tear of the ulnar collateral ligament in his left elbow Tuesday, will be examined by orthopedic specialist James Andrews on Wednesday. The left-hander will then decide whether to undergo a second ligament replacement surgery, which would sideline him for 12-18 months. . . . Moss, the A's first baseman, left in the third inning because of tightness in his right calf.

UP NEXT: Left-hander Tyler Skaggs (4-2, 3.97 ERA) will oppose Oakland left-hander Tommy Milone (3-3, 3.50 ERA) at Oakland Coliseum on Saturday at 7 p.m. On the air: TV: FS West. Radio: 830.

Angels don't make the grade over A's in 9-5 loss

MIKE DIGIOVANNA

The Angels and the American League West-leading Oakland Athletics opened a three-game series in the Oakland Coliseum on Friday night with 1 1/2 games separating the clubs.

A big series? Perhaps. The A's are the two-time defending division champions, a balanced and battle-tested team the Angels must overcome to claim their first AL West title since 2009.

A huge series? Angels catcher Hank Conger and right fielder Kole Calhoun both used that word in interviews Thursday, so it is to some. But a "crucial AL West showdown," as one website headline blared Friday? That might be a reach.

"It's May, man," said Angels second baseman Howie Kendrick, a nine-year veteran who has the perspective of having played in some crucial AL West showdowns from 2007 to 2009, when the Angels won three straight division titles.

"Every game is important. They're playing well, we're playing well, but at the end of the day, it comes down to winning games, whether it's the A's, Seattle, Houston, anybody. We've got to win games."

The Angels did not win a game Friday night. They didn't really come close. Garrett Richards, the flame-throwing right-hander touted as one of baseball's best young pitchers, didn't make it out of the first inning, giving up five runs, five hits and walking three in an eventual 9-5 loss.

First-inning singles by Coco Crisp and John Jaso and Josh Donaldson's walk loaded the bases for Brandon Moss, who lined a 2-and-0 pitch over the right-field wall for his first career grand slam.

Richards, who allowed one homer in 66 innings of his first 10 starts, gave up singles to Jed Lowrie and Josh Reddick and walked Derek Norris. Crisp's two-out walk forced in another run, and Richards was replaced by Wade LeBlanc.

"It's embarrassing—I didn't show up for us tonight," Richards said. "I didn't give us a chance to win. I put us in a hole early."

The A's and Angels played three one-run games in Anaheim in April, but Oakland seemed to assert itself as the alpha team Friday, using its typically solid pitching and contributions throughout the lineup to push their division lead to 2 1/2 games over the Angels.

"They have a lot of guys who get on base, a lot of guys who come up with big hits, and if one guy doesn't get it done, the next guy comes up and thinks he's going to get it done," Kendrick said. "Not everybody can do it all the time. That's why you have nine guys in the lineup and guys on the bench who can step up and do different things."

What the A's do better than most is pitch. They entered Friday leading the major leagues in earned-run average (2.89) and opponents batting average (.221), on-base percentage (.284), slugging percentage (.333) and average with runners in scoring position (.187).

And that's without two of their top starters, Jarrod Parker and A.J. Griffin, who are out for the season. "They've always been able to acquire and develop good pitching," Kendrick said, "whether they're winning or not."

Despite Friday's loss, the Angels could pose the greatest threat to the A's, their deeper rotation, bullpen and lineup leading to a five-game improvement from their 25-29 record through 54 games last season.

"They have a good team," Oakland Manager Bob Melvin said. "They made good acquisitions in the off-season. Pitching-wise, they're completely different from last year. They're stronger in the back of the bullpen. They're stronger in the rotation.

"And they're not relying on one or two guys offensively to carry the load. You look at C.J. Cron and Grant Green. They're swinging the bat really well. So is Kendrick. It's not just [Mike] Trout and [Albert] Pujols. They have one-through-nine guys they can rely on."

FROM THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Angels' Skaggs is in it for the long haul

BY JEFF FLETCHER / STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND – Tyler Skaggs has pitched so well he might be creating a problem for the Angels.

Skaggs, 22, who starts Saturday, has averaged 6 2/3 innings over his first 10 starts. If he maintains that through the full season, making 32 or 33 starts, he would surpass 200 innings.

He has not thrown more than 158 2/3 innings as a pro, and that was in 2011, between Class-A and Double-A. Last year, Skaggs pitched 148 1/3 innings between Triple-A and the majors. He has never pitched more 38 2/3 innings in the majors.

Standard practice in the industry has been for young pitchers to increase their innings gradually, usually by no more than 20 or 30 percent from year to year. It's why some teams have either shut down young pitchers or moved them to the bullpen, to limit their innings.

So far, the Angels aren't worried about Skaggs, but they are watching closely.

"I think you have to look at it," pitching coach Mike Butcher said. "It's a real thing. Guys start accumulating a lot of innings and it takes a toll on you. Mike (Scioscia) and I and Jerry (Dipoto) have all taken a look at it and are very aware of it, but he's very efficient. When those things happen, he may have less pitches than a lot of guys who hit that amount of innings."

Skaggs' efficiency – atypical for a young pitcher – is what has allowed him to pitch so many innings. He's averaged 3.51 pitches per batter faced, the lowest figure for any Angels starter.

Skaggs said he believes he's ready to jump to the 200-inning plateau if that is where his performances takes him.

"I think I'm ready to take that next step," he said. "It's one of those things, if you get your work in every day and keep your arm healthy and work out, why wouldn't you be able to get to 200 innings?"

CALHOUN SITS

Despite Kole Calhoun's two-hit, two-walk breakout game Thursday night, he was not in the lineup Friday night against left-hander Drew Pomeranz.

Scioscia said he believes Calhoun will eventually return to being an everyday player, but he chose to load the lineup with right-handed hitters. Lefties had hit .168 and righties .283 against Pomeranz in his career. Scioscia said Calhoun, who had been in a 1-for-19 slump before Thursday, might play Saturday against lefty Tommy Milone, whose splits are more balanced.

"Kole took huge step forward yesterday," Scioscia said. "The fact he saw so many pitches and got on base so much is why we considered him as leadoff guy. I think our best lineup will eventually have him up there, but at times, we have to adjust."

NOTES

Josh Hamilton began his rehab assignment with Triple-A Salt Lake City. He went 2 for 4 and scored a run. Hamilton is expected to play through the weekend for Salt Lake City, and possibly join the Angels on Tuesday in Houston. ...

Ian Stewart, who is out with a bruised hand, has returned to Arizona to rehab because he's still feeling some discomfort, Scioscia said. Stewart had played two games with Salt Lake City before pausing his rehab assignment. ...

Although Scioscia's usage of his bullpen lately has indicated that Ernesto Frieri has regained the full-time closer role, Scioscia still refuses to officially declare an end to the closer-by-committee. "Our best blueprint is with Ernie in back end and using Joe Smith in any area," he said. "Hopefully we're working toward that, but at times, we're still going to have Joe close some games out as we look to solidify bullpen."

Final: A's 9, Angels 5

BY JEFF FLETCHER / STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND – Such high hopes. Such a letdown.

Garrett Richards, arguably the Angels' best starting pitcher, took the ball for the opener of a showdown series with the first-place Oakland Athletics on Friday night.

Ten batters later, Richards gave the ball back to Manager Mike Scioscia, and he slinked off the mound with his team already behind by five runs.

Richards didn't even make it out of the first inning in the Angels' 9-5 loss in the first game of a series between the top two teams in the American League West.

The Angels came to Oakland for the first time this season riding an 11-3 streak, unbeaten in their last six series, and trailing the A's by just 1 1/2 games.

It all unraveled in one unsightly flash.

Richards gave up hits to the first two batters and issued a walk to load the bases. Pitching coach Mike Butcher jogged to the mound.

Whatever he said to Richards didn't work.

He fell behind 2-0 to Brandon Moss and then grooved a fastball down the middle, and Moss hammered it over the right-field fence.

Richards would give up two more hits and two more walks, one with the bases loaded, before Scioscia mercifully came to take the ball from him, an out short of completing one inning.

It was the Angels' shortest start since Jered Weaver was lifted without recording any outs on May 28, 2012.

Down 5-0, the Angels gave the ball to Wade LeBlanc, who at least saved the bullpen by pitching through the seventh inning. The Angels have not had a long man in the bullpen for most of the season, so they were fortunate that this game happened on night they did, or they would have crippled the bullpen for days.

The Angels managed to get all five of those runs back – on homers by Mike Trout and Howie Kendrick and a two-run double by C.J. Cron - but not before the A's had continued tacking on extra runs.

A's third baseman Josh Donaldson, an early MVP candidate, hit a homer in the second and a two-run shot in the fifth to pad the lead to 9-3. He also made a run-saving diving stop.

The Angels have now lost three of their first four games against the A's. Although it's too early to establish any dominance, especially considering the first three were one-run games, the A's have shown with their play over the first two months they are once again the team to beat in the division.

"They are having another great start to their season," Scioscia said before the game. "They've done it a lot of different ways. They've shown their resiliency and ability to adapt over last couple years. They have as much if not more balance than anyone in baseball from bullpen to position player sides and they're using it very well."

Angels' fall comes in a hurry vs. A's

Richards doesn't make it out of the first inning as Oakland cruises in the first game of the showdown.

BY JEFF FLETCHER / STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND – Although Garrett Richards came up short on execution, he came up big on accountability.

After Richards got knocked out in the first inning of the Angels' 9-5 loss in the opener of their showdown with the Oakland A's on Friday night, he took full responsibility.

"It's embarrassing," Richards said. "I didn't show up for us tonight. I didn't give us a chance to win. I put us in a hole early."

Richards, arguably the Angels' best starting pitcher, took the ball for the opener of a big series against the first-place team in the division. Ten batters later, he gave the ball back to Manager Mike Scioscia, with the Angels already down 5-0.

Richards gave up hits to the first two batters of the game, and issued a walk to load the bases. Pitching coach Mike Butcher jogged to the mound.

Whatever he said to Richards didn't work.

He fell behind 2-0 to Brandon Moss and then grooved a fastball down the middle, and Moss hammered it over the right-field fence.

"I didn't help myself by being behind in the count on every at-bat," Richards said. "It doesn't matter what kind of fastball you have, if you are behind in the count and they know it's coming, it's easy to hit."

Richards would give up two more hits and two more walks, loading the bases, before Scioscia mercifully came to take the ball from him, an out short of completing one inning.

"I felt good," Richards said. "My body felt good. I still had my velocity. I couldn't find the feel on the two-seam. I was cutting the four-seam out of the zone and the two-seam was sinking out of the zone. I tried to make some adjustments, but I wasn't able to do it tonight."

It was a stunning performance from a pitcher who had come into the game with a 3.00 ERA, having pitched some of the more dominating games of the Angels season. By the time he left, his ERA had ballooned to 3.65.

"I'm going to stay positive," Richards said. "I've had a hell of a year so far. I can't let one outing ruin my progress. I'm going to turn the page and move on to the next one."

If there was any silver lining for the Angels, it was that Wade LeBlanc, in his first appearance with the team, pitched 6 1/3 innings of relief to spare the bullpen, which is now fresh for the rest of the series. LeBlanc gave up four runs, three on Josh Donaldson's two homers.

Also, the Angels hitters came to life. They scored five runs on homers by Mike Trout and Howie Kendrick and a two-run double by C.J. Cron. That forced the A's to use two of their key back-end relievers, Luke Gregerson and closer Sean Doolittle.

"We kept fighting till the end," Richards said. "That says a lot about this team and our attitude."

On deck: Angels at A's, Saturday, 7 p.m.

BY JEFF FLETCHER / STAFF WRITER

ANGELS AT A'S**Where:** O.co Coliseum**TV:** Fox Sports West, 7 p.m.**Did you know:** Angels pitchers have held opponents to a .225 average, second best in the American League.**THE PITCHERS****LHP TYLER SKAGGS (4-2, 3.97)**

Skaggs has mostly performed at a high level, considering he's just 22 years old, but his last outing was quite a mixed bag. He gave up five runs, only two earned, in the first two innings, but then he bounced back to get through seven innings. Skaggs, who has relied on his two-seam fastball most of the year, recognized that it wasn't working as well, and he threw more four-seamers over the final five innings.

Vs. Oakland: 0-0, 6.00**At O.co Coliseum:** First game**LHP TOMMY MILONE (3-3, 3.50)**

Milone had slipped out of the A's rotation plans last year, but injuries have allowed him to jump back in this season and he's pitched well. He's a classic finesse lefty, who pitches to contact. Despite a repertoire that isn't eye-popping, he has a 3.86 career ERA in 73 games. He's particularly good at the pitcher-friendly O.co Coliseum.

Vs. Angels: 5-2, 4.17**At O.co Coliseum:** 14-8, 2.79**Loves to face:** David Freese, 1 for 6 (.167)**Hates to face:** Howie Kendrick, 10 for 23 (.435)*FROM ANGELS.COM***Angels have dug deep in the Draft for gems**

By Alden Gonzalez / MLB.com

SEATTLE -- The Angels weren't always the financial juggernauts you know of today, throwing around nine-figure contracts and dominating offseason headlines with splashy signings.

They used to have to build it through the Draft, and over the years they sniffed out several gems, many of whom played a big part in the franchise's success of the 2000s.

Leading up to the 2014 First-Year Player Draft, MLB.com selected the best players taken by the Angels in each of the first 15 rounds; players who either went on to have productive careers elsewhere or established themselves among the very best in team history.

The 2014 Draft will take place on June 5-7, beginning with the Draft preview show on MLB.com and MLB Network on Thursday, June 5, at 6 p.m. ET. Live Draft coverage from MLB Network's Studio 42 begins at 7 p.m., with the top 74 picks being streamed on MLB.com and broadcast on MLB Network. MLB.com's exclusive coverage of the second and third days will begin with a live Draft show at 12:30 p.m. ET on June 6.

MLB.com's coverage includes **Draft Central**, the **Top 100 Draft Prospects list** and Draft Tracker, a live interactive application that includes a searchable database of Draft-eligible players. Every selection will be tweeted live from [@MLBDraftTracker](#), and you can also keep up to date by following [@MLBDraft](#). And get into the Draft conversation by tagging your tweets with #mlbdraft.

Without further ado, here are the Angels' best Draft selections, round-by-round ...

Round 1: CF Mike Trout, 2009

No disrespect to **Jered Weaver**, **Troy Glaus**, **Darin Erstad**, **Jim Abbott** or **Frank Tanana**. All were first-round Draft picks, all were All-Star-caliber players and all went on to spend a bulk of their careers -- or the entirety of it, in Weaver's case so far -- donning an Angels uniform. But none of them were widely considered the greatest overall player in the game at the tender age of 22, as Trout is.

Trout was overlooked by many scouts, mostly because his high-school ball was played in the Northeast. But area scout Greg Morhardt saw a potential Hall of Famer, one former scouting director Eddie Bane would take with the No. 25 overall pick in '09. Trout's first two full seasons included unanimous selection for the American League Rookie of the Year Award, back-to-back second-place finishes in MVP voting and a 20.4 Wins Above Replacement score that was easily tops in the Majors.

Crazy as it may seem, Trout hasn't even come into his prime yet.

Round 2: SP John Lackey, 1999

Plucked out of the University of Texas, Lackey went on to become one of the best starting pitchers in Angels history, tied for fifth with Tanana in wins (102), sixth in strikeouts (1,201) and sixth in innings (1,501) while sporting a 3.81 ERA and winning three playoff games -- including Game 7 of the '02 World Series -- from 2002-09. Lackey left the Angels via a five-year, \$82.5 million contract with the Red Sox in December 2009, had a rough first three years in Boston, then played a big part in helping them win the World Series last fall. Former teammate **Jarrod Washburn** was also taken in the second round.

Round 3: RF Tim Salmon, 1989

The Angels selected this local product out of Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, and Salmon went on to become the franchise leader in homers with 299 from 1992 to 2006. The slugging right fielder spent his entire 14-year career in Anaheim, batted in the middle of the order for the World Series champions of '02 and finished his career with a .282/.385/.498 slash line. Salmon never made an All-Star team, but

he played at an All-Star level for a long time. First baseman **Wally Joyner** and third baseman **Carney Lansford** also deserve mention here.

Round 4: LF Garret Anderson, 1990

One year after taking Salmon in the third round, the Angels got another Southern California product in the fourth. And Anderson was every bit as big of an impact on the Angels franchise. With his smooth lefty stroke, Anderson notched a franchise record in hits with 2,368 -- way more than the second-place Salmon's 1,674 -- while making three All-Star teams, winning the Home Run Derby in 2003 and posting a .296/.327/.469 line from 1994 to 2008. This was also the round the Angels took All-Star starter **Mike Witt** in 1978.

Round 5: RP Bobby Jenks, 2000

Jenks had his ups and downs while trying to carve out a career as a starting pitcher in the Angels' system. Then the White Sox picked him up off waivers in December 2004, turned him into a reliever, and Jenks went on to compile a 3.40 ERA and 173 saves in the South Side of Chicago from 2005-10.

Round 6: CF Devon White, 1981

The Jamaica native spent his first six Major League seasons with the Angels, winning the first two of seven Gold Gloves and making the first of three All-Star Game appearances. White compiled 1,934 hits, 346 steals and a .263 batting average in his 17-year career. The Angels also drafted some local favorites in **Troy Percival**, **Clyde Wright** and **Gary DiSarcina** in this round.

Round 7: CF Jim Edmonds, 1988

Edmonds' best years wound up coming in St. Louis, but before that, he was a Angels fixture, winning a couple of Gold Gloves, making an All-Star team and turning in possibly the greatest catch in franchise history, diving over his shoulder near the warning track at Kauffman Stadium in 1997. Edmonds' career finished with eight Gold Gloves, 393 home runs and a .284 batting average. Edmonds was dealt to the Cardinals in a deal that brought back second baseman Adam Kennedy in March 2000. In December 2007, he was traded from the Cardinals to the Padres for current Angels third baseman David Freese.

Round 8: OF Kole Calhoun, 2010

In win-now mode and with the upper levels of their farm system drying up, the Angels wanted to take players who could rise through the system quickly in 2010. And in the eighth round, they got just that with Calhoun, who compiled 222 Major League plate appearances -- and an .808 OPS -- by his third full season in 2013 and entered 2014 as the starting right fielder and leadoff hitter.

Round 9: Mark McLemore, 1982

McLemore spent parts of his first five Major League seasons with the Angels, which wound up being one of seven teams he played for during a 19-year career in which he batted .259/.349/.341 while seeing time at six different positions (second base, third base, shortstop and all three outfield spots).

Round 10: 2B Howie Kendrick, 2002

Taken out of St. Johns River Community College in Palatka, Fla., Kendrick has continued to provide steady production at the keystone. The 30-year-old has been with the Angels since '06 and has been the everyday second baseman since 2010, providing solid defense, above-average speed and some of the best opposite-field power in the game. From 2010-13, Kendrick -- an All-Star in 2011 -- batted .287/.327/.426 while averaging 142 games per season.

Round 11: OF Ruben Amaro Jr., 1987

He's known now as the general manager of the Phillies, but before that, Amaro was a Major League outfielder, compiling 485 games and a .663 OPS from 1991-98. He played the first 10 games of his career with the Angels, then was traded alongside pitcher Kyle Abbott for outfielder and first baseman Von Hayes in December 1991.

Round 12: RP Jordan Walden, 2006

The hard-throwing Texan saved 32 games and posted a 2.98 ERA in 2011, then had a 3.46 ERA in 45 appearances in 2012 and was traded to the Braves in a one-for-one deal that brought back starting pitcher Tommy Hanson the following offseason.

Round 13: UT Alfredo Amezaga, 1999

The Mexico native played in 122 games with the Angels from 2002-04, before the Rockies selected him off waivers. Amezaga, who still plays for his home country, went on to have a nine-year Major League career, batting .247 and serving as a super-utility player in every sense of the word.

Round 14: SP Nick Adenhart, 2004

This pick comes with a heavy heart, because Adenhart was just starting to show glimpses of a sparkling career before a drunk driver took his life at age 22 on April 9, 2009. Hours earlier, Adenhart pitched six shutout innings against the A's in his 2009 debut. The Maryland native would've been 27 years old right now, and perhaps somewhere in the front end of the Angels' starting rotation.

Round 15: SP Chuck Finley, 1984

Officially, Finley was the fourth overall selection by the Angels in 1985. But that was in the January Secondary, a mere seven months after the Angels had originally selected him in the 15th round. Finley went on to be one of the best starting pitchers in franchise history from 1986-99, setting club records in wins (165) and innings (2,675), and ranking second to Nolan Ryan in strikeouts (2,151). Finley's career -- spent in Cleveland and St. Louis over the last three years - finished with a 3.85 ERA and five All-Star Game appearances.

Frieri feeds off ninth-inning pressure

By Alden Gonzalez / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Ernesto Frieri has appeared in the Angels' last three save chances, and though Mike Scioscia said Friday that there will still be nights when he turns to sidearmer Joe Smith in the ninth, it looks like Frieri has at least re-established himself as the team's primary closer.

"All I know is when I'm pitching the ninth, I pitch like a closer," Frieri said in Spanish. "I try to do the best I can to save the game. The final decision is up to the manager. I can't tell him I want to do it. I do want to [pitch the ninth]. But I have to show it, and I think more and more he's regaining that confidence in me."

Scioscia has always said his preference is for Frieri to get back to the point where he can close full time, so he has more flexibility with how to use Smith.

Lately, Frieri is making that a lot easier on him.

Since getting demoted after a ninth-inning meltdown in Washington D.C. on April 23, the 28-year-old right-hander has given up just two runs in 14 1/3 innings, striking out 16 batters, allowing eight baserunners and going 6-for-6 in save chances.

Frieri is among those who feels his intensity level is just different in the ninth.

"And I just like it better," he added. "I like to feel that adrenaline. You have to pitch, and you have to do your job no matter the situation. But it's not the same. It's not the same when you pitch in the eighth or the seventh as opposed to the ninth. That adrenaline is just different. Everyone experiences it different, but the ninth inning is the one for me. It's the one I like. I feel much better there. It brings the best out of me, I think."

Cron, Green battling to stay when Hamilton returns

OAKLAND -- It'll likely be either Grant Green or C.J. Cron getting sent back down to the Minor Leagues when Josh Hamilton makes his expected return to the starting lineup early next week.

That part isn't all that difficult to decipher.

But picking a favorite is.

Both of them are hitting, both of them bring their own intrinsic value to the roster -- and one will probably be broken-hearted in a few days.

"It's tough not to think about it, that's for sure," Green said. "When Josh comes back, you know somebody's gotta go. You just go out there and play the days that you do, and hopefully when that time comes it's not you. But in the same sense, if I get sent down I'll be happy for C.J. Hopefully vice versa."

Since coming up on May 3, Cron has batted .323/.353/.585 with three homers, nine RBIs and six doubles, bringing the Angels legitimate right-handed power and the ability to occasionally spell Albert Pujols at first base.

Since coming up on May 2, Green has batted .377/.393/.491 while giving the Angels coverage at up to five different positions -- second base, third base, shortstop, left field and, in case of emergency, first base.

"Me and Greeny came up in a situation where we didn't have time to develop; we had to contribute right away," Cron said. "We understood that, and we understand there also is a decision that has to be made. We've both been playing well, so you can't really think about it. Or else, it can get to you. You just have to play your game and try to help the team win as much as possible."

Angels general manager Jerry Dipoto gave the struggling Raul Ibanez a vote of confidence 10 days ago, saying he believes the veteran designated hitter can recover from the .153/.268/.282 slash line he currently sports, pointing out that keeping Ibanez is the best way for the organization to preserve depth and indicating that they have no thoughts of releasing the 41-year-old.

Unless that changes -- and there have been no indications otherwise -- it'll be Green vs. Cron.

And it's anybody's guess right now.

"Every player who is up here has positives that you would look at for why you want to keep them on the roster," Scioscia said. "That's why it's going to be a tough decision."

Calhoun sits in opener to avoid tough lefty

OAKLAND -- Angels right fielder Kole Calhoun finally broke out on Thursday, going 2-for-4 vs. the Mariners while drawing a couple of walks and admittedly seeing the ball better than he has since returning from a sprained right ankle nine days ago.

And for that effort, he earned a spot right back on the bench.

The left-handed-hitting Calhoun sat against A's lefty Drew Pomeranz on Friday, and may sit again when another lefty -- Tommy Milone -- starts on Saturday. Calhoun historically has even splits -- .750 OPS versus lefties, .749 OPS versus righties -- but Angels manager Mike Scioscia continues to platoon with his outfield corners, going with right-handed hitters Grant Green (left field) and Collin Cowgill (right field) in the series opener.

Scioscia said recently that Calhoun is "too good a hitter" to platoon.

But not against a guy who has limited lefties to a .168/.245/.224 slash line in his career, at least.

"Today is really just a matchup day against Pomeranz," Scioscia said. "His splits are really tilted toward giving more of a right-handed look to our lineup. It might be different vs. Milone. Kole took a huge step forward yesterday. Just the fact of him seeing so many pitches and getting on base so much is why in the first place we considered him as a potential leadoff candidate. I think our best lineup is a look that will eventually have him up there, but at times, we're going to have to adjust off of it."

Worth noting

- Albert Pujols returned to first base, and the No. 3 spot of the lineup, after missing his first game of the year to rest on Thursday. Erick Aybar led off for the Angels, with Howie Kendrick -- the leadoff hitter for seven straight games until Thursday -- batted fifth.
- Third baseman Ian Stewart, out since May 11 with a left hand contusion, is currently rehabbing at the Angels' complex in Arizona. Scioscia said "his hand still has a little bit of discomfort in it, and our medical department wants to make sure they get it out of there before he gets back to full swing."
- Playing for Triple-A Salt Lake, Hector Santiago gave up one run in 5 1/3 innings on Friday, scattering four hits, walking three batters and striking out seven, while Josh Hamilton had two singles in four plate appearances, striking out once. Hamilton was playing in his second rehab game, and first in eight days after suffering a bone bruise in his surgically repaired left thumb. Santiago is trying to prove he belongs in the rotation again.

Angels get no aid from crew chief's home run review

By Alden Gonzalez / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Not even video replay could help the Angels early in Friday's series opener at O.co Coliseum.

Angels manager Mike Scioscia urged umpires to conduct a crew chief review when Josh Donaldson's drive to right field bounced back into the field of play after clearing the scoreboard to lead off the second, but replay confirmed the home run call, and Oakland built a 6-0 lead before recording its fourth out of the game.

Garrett Richards gave up five runs in the first, on a grand slam by Brandon Moss and a two-out, bases-loaded walk to Coco Crisp. The 26-year-old right-hander exited immediately after that, paving the way for lefty Wade LeBlanc and making it the shortest outing by an Angels starter since Jered Weaver on May 28, 2012.

Umpires are allowed to consult replay on home run calls without having the manager use his challenge.

Halos can't overcome Richards' rocky start, fall to A's

Righty allows five runs in first inning; Trout, Kendrick homer in vain

By Alden Gonzalez / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Garrett Richards had only one word for his latest outing.

"Embarrassing."

After lasting only two-thirds of an inning, and allowing eight of 10 batters to reach, and loading the bases twice, and giving up his first career grand slam, and putting the Angels in a five-run hole before the end of the first inning against the first-place A's, there was no overstating it.

"I didn't show up for us tonight," Richards said, speaking moments after the 9-5 loss at O.co Coliseum on Friday night, but hours after his work was finished. "I didn't give us a chance to win, and I put us in a hole early."

The Angels -- now 30-24 and 2 1/2 games back of Oakland in the American League West, and their chances of finishing the weekend in first place ruined -- got a bullpen-saving performance from Wade LeBlanc, who gave up four runs in 6 1/3 innings, and made it a lot more interesting than it could've been.

But the hole was too deep.

Richards gave up back-to-back singles to Coco Crisp and John Jaso to start the game, issued a four-pitch walk to Josh Donaldson, then grooved a 2-0 fastball right down the middle to A's first baseman Brandon Moss, who blasted it way out to right-center field to plate four runs with one swing.

"I was definitely ready for it," Moss said. "I don't think there's many times I go up there taking."

After striking out Yoenis Cespedes, Richards gave up back-to-back singles to Jed Lowrie and Josh Reddick, walked Derek Norris on four straight pitches, struck out Alberto Callaspo, then walked Crisp with the bases loaded. And that was it.

It matched the shortest start of Richards' career -- also on Aug. 15, 2011, against the Rangers -- and was the quickest exit by an Angels starter since Jered Weaver failed to record an out on May 28, 2012, against the Yankees, a start in which he exited with a back injury.

"Obviously he didn't have his release point," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said.

But Richards felt good as he took the mound at around 7 p.m. PT, and said he didn't feel over-amped to face the Angels' division rivals.

"I felt good," Richards said. "My body feels good. I still had my velo and stuff. I just couldn't find a feel on the two-seam. I was cutting the four-seam out of the zone and the two-seam was sinking out of the zone. I tried to work through it, tried to make some adjustments, but wasn't able to do it."

Richards fell behind on six of the 10 batters he faced, including each of the first four, and started off 2-0 on four of them. Twenty-one of his 37 pitches went for balls.

As Richards said, "I didn't help myself out."

Chris Iannetta made two trips to the mound, one of them alongside pitching coach Mike Butcher, first to try to calm him down and then to try to build up his confidence. But none of it worked.

"I hope this happens to him 10, 15 more times in his career because that would mean he's had a long career," Iannetta said. "This stuff just happens. The best pitchers in the game, you see them come out in the first, second inning because they struggled. It'll happen again. Hopefully it happens to him again, because that'll mean he played for a long time."

The Angels battled back, as they've done several times this season. Mike Trout hit a solo homer and Howie Kendrick added a two-run shot in the fourth against lefty Drew Pomeranz, who entered with a 1.38 ERA in four starts since replacing Dan Straily in the rotation, and C.J. Cron added a two-run double against Dan Otero.

And had it not been for Donaldson, who tallied a solo homer in the second, an RBI single in the third and a two-run shot in the fifth -- they may have actually completed the comeback.

But the hole Richards dug was too deep.

And there was another word he could've used for it -- surprising.

The 26-year-old right-hander entered 4-1 with a 3.00 ERA in his first 10 starts this season. He had allowed only one home run in 66 innings, and had given up just six runs in 39 frames on the road.

"It's just like anything else in this game," Richards said. "It's a learning experience. I'm going to stay positive. I've had a [heck] of a year so far, and I can't let one outing ruin my progress."

Milone, Skaggs square off in rematch of April meeting

A's look to secure series win over Angels in AL West showdown

By Aaron Leibowitz / MLB.com

Several A's starting pitchers have exceeded expectations in 2014. Sonny Gray looks like an ace in his first full season. Scott Kazmir is having a career year at age 30. Jesse Chavez, a reliever until this year, boasts a sub-3.00 ERA.

But perhaps the unsung hero for Oakland is left-hander Tommy Milone, who will get the ball Saturday night when the A's host the Angels for the middle game of a three-game AL West showdown.

After winning 25 games between 2012-13, Milone got off to a slow start this year and at one point appeared to be on the chopping block. But the A's chose to demote Dan Straily instead, and Milone has proven they made the right choice.

In four starts since Straily's demotion, Milone has gone 3-0 with a 1.03 ERA.

"I knew something needed to change because I knew, even though I wasn't throwing terribly before that, it still wasn't the pitcher that I knew I was," Milone said.

The 27-year-old southpaw decided to make some minor tweaks to his delivery.

"Just shortened my stride a little bit," he said. "It made me a little bit taller, working downhill. It's helped with my command, being able to spot my fastball, which is what I need to do."

Milone previously faced the Angels on April 16, allowing two earned runs over six innings and taking a no-decision.

In that game, Milone took on Tyler Skaggs, who gave up four runs in six innings and got the win.

The two southpaws will square off once again on Saturday, with Skaggs looking to bring down his 4.70 ERA during an up-and-down month of May.

"Me personally, I feel like I've had a great month," Skaggs said. "It's one of those things where I feel like I'm throwing the ball well, throwing the ball down in the zone, throwing it for strikes.

"I know I've had some games where I've let some innings balloon up, but that's part of learning. I'm 22-years-old, trying to figure it out out there. Slowly but surely figuring it out."

Angels: Green back in Oakland and surging

Infielder Grant Green is back in Oakland, 10 months after being acquired by the Angels in the one-for-one trade that sent Alberto Callaspo to the A's.

With the A's, Green -- the 13th overall selection from the University of Southern California in 2009 -- couldn't get much time in the big leagues. With the Angels, Green is proving he belongs in the Majors, posting a .377/.393/.491 slash line heading into Friday's series opener while playing primarily left field. Green, who also returned to the Coliseum as a visitor in September last year, believes he has grown as a player since he left.

"I was happy to see some of the guys in BP, catch up with them," he said. "Hopefully we can do well in this series."

A's: Johnson hearing boo birds at home

Jim Johnson, who the A's signed for \$10 million in the offseason to be their closer, has had a nightmare start in Oakland. In particular, the right-hander has performed terribly at home.

At the Coliseum, Johnson has posted a 14.04 ERA and a .465 opponents' average. On the road, those numbers are 1.98 and .208, respectively.

After allowing two runs to the Tigers in the seventh inning on Thursday, Johnson heard plenty of boos from the home crowd. Several of his teammates have expressed their disapproval of the gesture.

"There was a time when we were all kind of one, which made it so special," Josh Donaldson said of the team's relationship with the fans. "We fed off them, they fed off us. Now what?"

"The very first sign of trouble, they were jumping down his throat and booing him off the field," said Sean Doolittle, who was named the A's new closer on May 20. "We were looking at each other going, 'What?' We don't do this here.

"I can understand that they're frustrated. He's replacing another closer with a great track record [Grant Balfour], who was a fan favorite. I get it. It just seems uncharacteristic."

Worth Noting:

- The A's are 35-26 against the Angels over the last four seasons, including 29-3 when scoring four runs or more.
- Opponents are batting .225 against Angels pitching, a mark that ranked second in the American League heading into the weekend series.

FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moss, Donaldson power A's to 9-5 win over Angels

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Brandon Moss had grand slam on his mind. It felt as good as he thought it might. Moss hit a grand slam in the first inning, Josh Donaldson had two home runs and four RBIs, and the Oakland Athletics beat the Los Angeles Angels 9-5 on Friday night.

"I've never come close to one," Moss said after his first career slam. "I came close-ish once last year when I flied out to the wall. It was on my mind, not that I was trying to hit one. I just thought it would be cool to do it. And it felt good, for sure."

Coco Crisp had two hits and drove in a run for the A's, who have won three of five since a four-game losing streak.

Moss, who left the game later with right calf tightness, came to the plate ready to swing.

"He had just thrown six balls in a row and I was looking for one pitch in one spot," he said. "He needed to throw a strike. He has good stuff and you never know if the first pitch will be the best one you see. He missed twice and then threw a pitch in a good spot."

Howie Kendrick hit a two-run homer and Mike Trout added a solo shot for the Angels, who lost for only the seventh time in 21 games. C.J. Cron also drove in a pair of runs.

Drew Pomeranz (5-2) pitched a season-high 5 1/3 innings, allowing five runs and four hits. He walked three and struck out five.

Pomeranz had not allowed a run at home in 17 innings before the Angels struck in the fourth. Garrett Richards (4-2) had not allowed more than two runs or five hits in his first six starts on the road before giving up five runs on five hits in the first inning.

"That was embarrassing," he said. "I didn't show up for us tonight. I put us in a hole early. I couldn't find a feel for the two-seamer and couldn't make the adjustment."

He did get an out prior to Moss' slam and loaded the bases again before getting his second (and final) out. Richards walked Crisp to force in a run and was replaced by Wade LeBlanc.

"When you know a fastball is coming, it's easier to hit," Richards said. "Wade threw a heck of a game to keep us in it. I'm disappointed, but I can't let one outing ruin my progress."

Donaldson homered in the second and singled home a run in the third before the Angels answered with three runs in the fourth on the homers by Kendrick and Trout.

Donaldson added a two-run shot in the fifth to put the A's up 9-3. Cron responded with a two-run double in the sixth.

"I've been seeing good pitches for a while now," Donaldson said. "It's a matter of squaring them up or not. I was preparing for Richards and then it's completely different with LeBlanc. He left a couple of mistakes over the plate and I was able to take advantage."

Moss got his 19th extra-base hit of the month, setting an Oakland record for May. Donaldson reached base safely in his 45th straight game as a third baseman, the longest such streak in franchise history since at least 1914.

LeBlanc pitched 6 1/3 innings in relief. He gave up four runs and six hits, striking out four.

Game notes

The A's sent 10 batters or more to the plate in an inning for the sixth time this season, which leads the majors. ... Angels OF Josh Hamilton was 2 for 4 with a run scored and a strikeout in his first game of a rehab assignment with Triple-A Salt Lake. ... Oakland LHP Eric O'Flaherty threw 20 pitches in a simulated game at Triple-A Sacramento on Thursday. ... LHPTyler Skaggs (4-2, 3.97 ERA) is the Angels' scheduled starter Saturday. He set a season high with eight strikeouts in his last start. LHP Tommy Milone (3-3, 3.50) goes for the A's. He is 3-0 with a 1.03 ERA over his last four starts. ... Trout extended his hitting streak to 11 games. ... The A's improved to 21-3 when scoring first, best in the majors.

Angels-Athletics Preview

By NICOLINO DIBENEDETTO (STATS Writer) AP - Sports

Tommy Milone's recent dominance can be attributed to a change in his delivery.

The Oakland Athletics are looking to continue changing things at the plate, too.

Milone goes for a fourth straight win for the first time in over a year, as the A's look to build on their offensive barrage against the Los Angeles Angels on Saturday night.

Milone (3-3, 3.50 ERA) started 2014 by going 0-3 with a 5.86 ERA over his first five starts, prompting him to shorten the stride in his delivery.

So far, it seems to be working.

The left-hander is 3-0 with a 1.03 ERA in four starts since. He was superb again in Monday's 10-0 win over Detroit, allowing four hits with six strikeouts in 6 2-3 innings.

"I think it's really helped with my command," Milone said. "I think that's the biggest thing I've seen from before and now is command with the fastball and keeping everything low in the zone."

Milone is 2-0 with a 2.45 ERA over his last three starts against the Angels (30-24). That includes yielding one run and four hits in seven innings of a 3-1 win in the most recent home start against them July 27.

While Milone's adjustment is paying dividends, the AL West-leading A's (33-22) are hoping they've snapped out of their recent offensive funk.

Oakland jumped out to a five-run, first-inning lead before finishing with 11 hits - three homers - in Friday's 9-5 win in the opener of this three-game series.

The A's were batting .216 and averaging 3.6 runs while dropping six of their previous eight games, and that included an 11-hit, five-homer effort in support of Milone.

Brandon Moss has one hit in each of the last two meetings with the Angels, but they're both homers that drove in seven runs. He had a first-inning grand slam Friday, ending his 4-for-30 slump over the previous eight games.

Moss, though, has a team-record 19 extra-base hits this month.

Josh Donaldson, however, is looking to continue his recent tear. The third baseman is 10 for 23 with five homers and 10 RBIs in six games after homering on two of his three hits while plating four runs Friday. "I've been seeing good pitches for a while now," Donaldson said. "It's a matter of squaring them up or not."

Donaldson is 9 for 20 in four season meetings with Los Angeles.

The Angels have alternated wins and losses over the past seven games, and they'll likely need a better performance on the mound after Oakland's lineup knocked out Garrett Richards with two outs in the first inning Friday.

Tyler Skaggs (4-2, 3.97) will get the nod, and he's 3-1 with a 1.80 ERA in four road starts. However, that defeat came Monday, when he was tagged for five runs - two earned - through the first two innings before settling down with five scoreless in a 5-1 defeat at Seattle.

The left-hander's only meeting with the A's ended in a 5-4, 12-inning win on April 16, and all the four runs he allowed came in the fourth before he exited two innings later.

Mike Trout is on an 11-game hitting streak, during which he's batting .415 with three homers and 10 RBIs. He had a solo shot for one of his two hits Friday, but he's 2 for 13 with a homer and a double versus Milone.

FROM FOX SPORTS WEST

Angels vs. Athletics: What to watch for in three-game series

Michael Martinez
FOX Sports West

Less than two months into the season, the Angels have undeniably established themselves as contenders in the American League West. But are they good enough to unseat the defending division champion Oakland A's?

That's the question. The Angels face the A's three times in Oakland starting tonight at 6:30 p.m. on FOX Sports West, and a sweep would put them in the division lead for the first time this season.

Maybe that's too much to ask, but Oakland has lost six of its past eight games, and in their first meeting last month, all three contests were decided by one run and two of them went extra innings. The A's won two of the three, but that was primarily because the Angels' bullpen was unable to protect leads.

A lot has changed since then. Here are four keys to the series that starts with the Angels' Garrett Richards (4-1, 3.00 ERA) facing A's left-hander Drew Pomeranz (4-2, 1.38):

1. The bullpen. The Angels imploded in their two previous losses to Oakland when closer **Ernesto Frieri** blew a save opportunity in the series opener and **Joe Smith** failed to retire a batter the next night, resulting in losses.

The relievers are pitching considerably better, but they'll need to keep games close and hold leads for a starting staff that has a collective 2.94 ERA over the past 20 games.

2. Albert Pujols. The Angels 34-year-old first baseman reluctantly took a day off Thursday in **Seattle**, but the rest should do him good. He leads the team with 14 home runs and is second to Mike Trout in RBI (32), but he's 2 for 15 in his past four games and probably needed a little rest.

Because the A's have a major league-best 2.89 team ERA, runs will be important. If Pujols and Trout can produce some in the early innings, it will give a big dose of confidence to the Angels' offense in what should be a low-scoring series.

3. Tyler Skaggs. The Angels rookie left-hander (4-2, 3.97), who starts Saturday's game against Tommy Milone (3-3, 3.50), had one bad inning when he faced the A's last month, but that's pretty much been his pattern this season. He remains a work in progress, learning from his mistakes and trying not to repeat them.

In his past two starts, however, Skaggs has allowed just three earned runs over 14 innings, a good sign that he's finding his way. It will be important for him to keep runners off base and maintain a manageable pitch count.

4. Series finale. A tantalizing matchup awaits Sunday's game: **Jered Weaver** (6-3, 2.99) vs. Sonny Gray (5-1, 2.31) in a matchup of aces. Gray ranks second in the AL in ERA, while Weaver is ninth. Weaver is fifth in WHIP (walks and hits per nine innings) at 1.05, Gray is ninth (1.12).

In his last start, Weaver surrendered three runs to the **Mariners** in six innings, but in a seven-start stretch before that, he worked 47 2/3 innings and gave up just 33 hits and nine earned runs, a 1.70 ERA. The last game in the series could determine whether the Angels take over the AL West lead or move themselves closer to first place. Either would be a positive development as they approach the summer.

FROM SPORTS XCHANGE

Team Report - LOS ANGELES ANGELS

INSIDE PITCH

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Outfielder Josh Hamilton resumed his rehab assignment Friday night with Triple-A Salt Lake at Tacoma, and he could be activated from the disabled list as soon as Tuesday when the Angels open a three-game series at Houston.

Hamilton has missed 46 games since tearing the ulnar collateral ligament in his left thumb while diving into first base on April 9 against Seattle.

Hamilton, who underwent surgery April 11, started in left field and went 2-for-4 with a strikeout and scored a run for Salt Lake. He will travel with the Bees to Albuquerque and play rehab games Saturday and Sunday.

"We'll evaluate him this weekend, see where he is and see if he'll be ready sometime in the Houston series," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said before his team's 9-5 loss against Oakland.

Hamilton began a rehab assignment May 22 but it was derailed when his thumb was jammed during an at-bat and he suffered a bone bruise.

The Angels have gone 26-19 without Hamilton. Scioscia was asked how dangerous the Angels attack could be once Hamilton returns.

"A player like Josh, when we missed him, or a player like (first baseman) Albert (Pujols) last year, you have guys that can fill in, but it's not the same presence you have in that lineup, it's not the same depth you can create," Scioscia said. "He's used to hitting right in the middle of the lineup every day. We've had to mix and match a lot more. And I think our guys have done a tremendous job. So our lineup's going to get dangerous not just with Josh getting in it but with (3B) David Freese getting into his game, (OF) Raul Ibanez getting into his game, getting the lineup lengthened to where you're pressuring teams every inning.

"That's when we're at our best. And I think by mixing and matching some guys, we've gotten some pretty good looks at some pitchers and we've taken strides to become that team that can pressure teams every inning. Josh will just add to that, but it's not going to be one guy coming back and all of a sudden your lineup will just go poof and you're there. As well as we've done, there are some guys that are still working their way into their game and we're going to need them."

Scioscia said he wasn't sure what his lineup would look like when Hamilton returned, but he made it clear that center fielder Mike Trout would continue hitting directly in front of Pujols. He also hinted strongly that Trout would continue batting second and that Hamilton would hit fourth, once he's up to speed.

"If we have Albert and Josh, we can really bunch those guys in the middle with those guys 3 and 4," Scioscia said. "Mike, you can put him in any spot and he's going to be successful. You want to take advantage of his (ability to get) on base. You want to make sure that he sets the table for guys. That's why you want him in front of that group. How much do you want to push that group down? Because Mike could hit fourth in a good lineup with those guys fifth and sixth. I really like the offensive chemistry of our lineup, definitely one through four, when you have a leadoff guy, whether it's (outfielder) Kole (Calhoun) or whoever, Mike, Albert and Josh. I think that meets the needs of those guys from an individual level as far as setting the table for them, and for our team."

NOTES, QUOTES

RECORD: 30-24

STREAK: Won one

NEXT: Angels (LHP Tyler Skaggs, 4-2, 3.97 ERA) at Athletics (LHP Tommy Milone, 3-3, 3.50 ERA)

PLAYER NOTES:

--RHP Garrett Richards lasted just two-thirds of an inning Friday night against the Oakland A's, giving up five runs on five hits, including a grand slam to 1B Brandon Moss in a 9-5 loss. Richards matched the shortest start of his career. He lasted just two-thirds of an inning on Aug. 15, 2011 against Texas, but he left that game with a groin strain. Richards fell to 4-2 as his ERA jumped from 3.00 to 3.65. Until Friday, he hadn't pitched fewer than five innings in any of his 10 starts. "It's embarrassing," Richards said. "I didn't show up for us tonight. I couldn't find a feel for my two-seamer. It kept sinking out of the zone. I tried to make adjustments and I just couldn't do it."

--CF Mike Trout hit his 11th home run of the season Friday night, a solo shot leading off the fourth inning of a 9-5 loss to Oakland. On a 1-0 count, Trout crushed LHP Drew Pomeranz's 89 mph fastball over the left-center field fence for the Angels first hit of the game. Trout went 2-for-5 and extended his hitting streak to 11 games but struck out three times. He has driven in 16 runs over his past 18 games."

--2B Howie Kendrick hit his third home run of the season Friday night, a two-run blast in the fourth inning off LHP Drew Pomeranz in a 9-5 loss to Oakland. Kendrick went 2-for-4 and scored twice. He's batting .291 with 10 doubles, three triples, three homers and 24 RBIs.

--OF Josh Hamilton (torn ulnar collateral ligament in left thumb) resumed his rehab assignment Friday night with Triple-A Salt Lake at Tacoma. He started in left field and went 2-for-4 with a strikeout and scored a run for Salt Lake. He will travel with the Bees to Albuquerque and play rehab games Saturday and Sunday. If all goes well, could be activated as soon as Tuesday when the Angels open a three-game series at Houston.

--INF Ian Stewart (left hand bruise) has yet to resume his rehab assignment with Triple-A Salt Lake and remains at the Angels' Spring Training headquarters in Arizona getting treatment. He went on the 15-day disabled list May 12 and began a rehab assignment May 25, but it was halted after two games. "His hand still has a little bit of discomfort in it and the medical department wants to make sure it get outs of there before he gets back at full swing in trying to get into rehab games," Angels manager Mike Sioscia said Friday.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "It's embarrassing. I didn't show up for us tonight. I couldn't find a feel for my two-seamer. It kept sinking out of the zone. I tried to make adjustments and I just couldn't do it." -- RHP Garrett Richards, who lasted just two-thirds of an inning Friday against Oakland, giving up five runs on five hits, including a grand slam to 1B Brandon Moss.

ROSTER REPORT

MEDICAL WATCH:

--LHP Sean Burnett (torn left ulnar collateral ligament) went on the 15-day disabled list May 29. He will miss the rest of the season, and he might undergo his second Tommy John surgery in less than a year.

--OF Josh Hamilton (torn ulnar collateral ligament in left thumb) went on the 15-day disabled list April 9. He underwent surgery April 11. He began a rehab assignment with Triple-A Salt Lake on May 22, but his thumb was jammed on a pitch. He was diagnosed with a bone bruise May 26, but he took batting practice May 28-29. He resumed his rehab with Salt Lake on May 30. If all goes well, he could be activated June 3.

--INF Ian Stewart (left hand bruise) went on the 15-day disabled list May 12. He began a rehab assignment with Triple-A Salt Lake from May 25 but it was halted after two games and he has been at the team's Spring Training headquarters in Arizona getting treatment.

--RHP Dane De La Rosa (sore right shoulder) went on the 15-day disabled list April 15. He made four rehab appearances for Triple-A Salt Lake from May 4-10, then shut down the rehab assignment May 14 due to shoulder tightness. He received a cortisone injection May 14, and he threw a bullpen session May 18. He re-started his Triple-A rehab assignment May 21.

--RHP Ryan Brasier (right elbow strain) went on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to March 21, and he was transferred to the 60-day DL on April 16.

--LHP Brian Moran (left elbow inflammation) went on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to March 21, and he was transferred to the 60-day DL on April 13. He underwent season-ending Tommy John surgery the week of April 14.

ROTATION:

RHP Jered Weaver
LHP C.J. Wilson
RHP Garrett Richards
LHP Tyler Skaggs
RHP Matt Shoemaker

BULLPEN:

RHP Joe Smith (closer)
RHP Ernesto Frieri
RHP Kevin Jepsen
RHP Fernando Salas
RHP Michael Kohn

RHP Mike Morin
LHP Wade LeBlanc

CATCHERS:

Chris Iannetta
Hank Conger

INFIELDERS:

1B Albert Pujols
2B Howie Kendrick
SS Erick Aybar
3B David Freese
INF C.J. Cron
INF John McDonald

OUTFIELDERS:

LF Raul Ibanez
CF Mike Trout
RF Kole Calhoun
OF Collin Cowgill
OF/INF Grant Green

Team Report – OAKLAND ATHLETICS

INSIDE PITCH

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Second baseman Eric Sogard is typically in the starting lineup when the A's face a right-handed starting pitcher. But Sogard was out of the lineup Friday night against Angels right-hander Garrett Richards, with Alberto Callaspo starting at second for just the fifth time this season.

Sogard hit .266 last season in 130 games, but he's batting just .188 this year. He's batting .158 in May (9-for-57) after hitting .220 in April.

As much as A's manager Bob Melvin loves Sogard's defense, he decided it was time to give him a night off in hopes of getting him back on track at the plate.

"He's struggling a little bit," Melvin said before the A's 9-5 victory. "The numbers are probably indicative of what he's doing right now. It's not like he's striking out a ton, but he's just not getting good contact right now. We've seen him get hot before. Sometimes you start pressing a little bit, so an off day is probably a good thing from time to time. A couple good games and he'll probably be off to the races, but right now, it's a little bit of a struggle for him."

The switch-hitting Callaspo batted .319 (7-for-22) over his previous seven games before going 0-for-4 against the Angels, his former team.

"He's just looked a little more confident up there at the plate now, identifying better pitches to hit, which is usually the case," Melvin said of Callaspo. "It's easier said than done."

"There's times you're struggling and you just try to swing at anything and try to make contact. You try to force an outcome. (Callaspo) looks a lot looser at the plate now."

NOTES, QUOTES

RECORD: 33-22

STREAK: Won one

NEXT: Angels (LHP Tyler Skaggs, 4-2, 3.97 ERA) at Athletics (LHP Tommy Milone, 3-3, 3.50 ERA)

PLAYER NOTES:

--LHP Drew Pomeranz (5-2) had his worst start of the season but got the win Friday night in Oakland's 9-5 victory against the Angels. Pomeranz, who allowed a combined two runs in his first four starts, gave up five on four hits, including two home runs, through 5 1/3 innings. He struck out two and walked three. Pomeranz threw more than five innings for the first time since July 27, 2012, a span of 20 starts. It was the longest such stretch in the major leagues since at least 1914.

--1B/OF Brandon Moss hit his first career grand slam Friday night, a blast in the first inning of Oakland's 9-5 victory against the Angels, but he left the game in the bottom of the third with tightness in his right calf. RHP Garrett Richards threw a 96 mph fastball over the middle of the plate on a 2-0 count, and Moss launched it to right field for his 13th home run of the season. Moss became just the fourth Oakland cleanup hitter to hit a grand slam in the first inning, joining Dave Kingman, Mark McGwire and Matt Stairs. He set career highs for home runs (9) and RBIs (25) in a month. He also set an Oakland record with his 19th extra-base hit in May. A's manager Bob Melvin said Moss is day-to-day but doubtful for Saturday's game against the Angels. "I don't know how I hurt it," Moss said. "I was coming onto the field in between innings ... and it just balled up on me into a cramp. I couldn't really get the cramp out for the entire inning. It was hurting pretty bad."

--3B Josh Donaldson hit two home runs Friday night, a solo blast in the second inning and a two-run shot in the fifth in a 9-5 victory against the Angels. He now has a team-high 15 home runs for the season and has homered five times in the past six games. Donaldson had his second career multi-homer game Friday. He homered twice against Houston this season on April 24. "It's just one of those things you go in stretches where you're not going to miss some pitches when they're over the plate," Donaldson said. Donaldson went 3-for-4, drove in four runs, scored three times and walked once against the Angels.

--RHP Ryan Cook (right forearm strain) will begin a rehab assignment Saturday with Class A Stockton and expects to pitch one inning out of the bullpen. If all goes well, Cook could be activated from the 15-day disabled list after only one rehab appearance, A's manager Bob Melvin said.

--LHP Eric O'Flaherty (Tommy John surgery in May 2013) pitched a simulated game on Thursday at Triple-A Sacramento and will pitch an inning Monday in a game at extended Spring Training in Arizona.

O'Flaherty, who went on the 60-day disabled list on Feb. 17, is 20-9 with a 2.85 ERA for his career with 373 relief appearances for Seattle and Atlanta. The A's signed him as a free agent on Jan. 22.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "I've never even come close to hitting one. I think I came close-ish last year. We had bases loaded against the Twins and I flew out against the wall. It's definitely something I had thought about. I hit fastballs really well and right there he's going to throw you one. It was on my mind. Definitely not trying to do it, but I thought it would be really cool to do it." -- 1B Brandon Moss, who blasted his first career grand slam Friday.

ROSTER REPORT

MEDICAL WATCH:

--1B Brandon Moss (right calf tightness) left the May 30 game in the bottom of the third inning. According to A's manager Bob Melvin, he's day-to-day but doubtful for the May 31 game.

--RHP Ryan Cook (right forearm strain) went on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to May 8. An MRI revealed no ligament damage. He resumed throwing off flat ground the week of May 19-25, and he threw a bullpen session May 27, using all his pitches. He threw a more extensive bullpen session May 29 and will begin a rehab assignment May 31 with Class A Stockton that might last only one game.

--INF Jake Elmore (strained left quad) went on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to March 28, and he was transferred to the 60-day DL on May 18. He began a rehab assignment with Triple-A Sacramento on April 24 but appeared in only two games before suffering a minor setback. Elmore's condition was improved as of May 6. He is scheduled to take some at-bats in a simulated game May 29 at Triple-A Sacramento.

--RHP A.J. Griffin (right flexor tendinitis) went on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to March 21, and he was transferred to the 60-day DL on May 4. He underwent season-ending Tommy John surgery April 30.

--LHP Eric O'Flaherty (Tommy John surgery in May 2013) went on the 60-day disabled list Feb. 17. He threw 35 pitches in a bullpen session April 22. He threw a 30-pitch bullpen session May 6 and threw to hitters May 10 and May 13. He pitched to hitters again May 20. He threw 15 pitches in a simulated inning in Arizona on May 24. He pitched a simulated game May 29 at Triple-A Sacramento and will pitch an inning June 2 in a game at extended Spring Training in Arizona.

--RHP Jarrod Parker (torn right ulnar collateral ligament) went on the 60-day disabled list March 20. He had a second Tommy John surgery March 24, and he will miss the entire season.

ROTATION:

RHP Sonny Gray

LHP Scott Kazmir

RHP Jesse Chavez

LHP Tommy Milone

LHP Drew Pomeranz

BULLPEN:

LHP Sean Doolittle (closer)

RHP Jim Johnson
RHP Luke Gregerson
RHP Dan Otero
LHP Fernando Abad
RHP Fernando Rodriguez
LHP Jeff Francis

CATCHERS:

John Jaso
Derek Norris

INFIELDERS:

1B Brandon Moss
2B Eric Sogard
SS Jed Lowrie
3B Josh Donaldson
INF Nick Punto
INF Alberto Callaspo
INF/OF Kyle Blanks

OUTFIELDERS:

LF Yoenis Cespedes
CF Coco Crisp
RF Josh Reddick
OF Craig Gentry