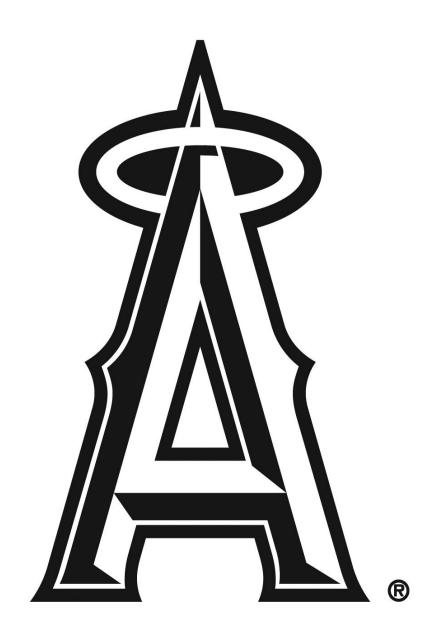
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Clips

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FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

Angels pitcher Jarrett Grube could make big league debut this weekend

MIKE DIGIOVANNA

Wade LeBlanc relieved struggling starter Garrett Richards in the first inning Friday night and threw 94 pitches over 6 1/3 innings in a 9-5 loss to Oakland, saving the Angels bullpen for the final two games of a series against the American League West-leading Athletics.

And what was his reward? The veteran left-hander was designated for assignment Saturday so the Angels could call up a fresh arm from triple-A Salt Lake, 32-year-old right-hander Jarrett Grube, who has never pitched in the big leagues.

Tough business.

"Pure and simple, it's bad timing for Wade," Angels Manager Mike Scioscia said. "But he threw a lot last night, and we needed some coverage and length in the bullpen for today and Sunday, so we had to get a fresh arm up here."

Grube signed with the Angels as a minor league free agent in July 2012, finishing that season with double-A Arkansas and pitching for both Arkansas and triple-A Salt Lake in 2013.

He was 3-2 with a 3.52 earned-run average in 11 starts for Salt Lake this season, giving up 10 homers, striking out 51 and walking 18 in 61 1/3 innings.

After 10-plus seasons in the minor leagues, including one of independent-league ball, Grube found out late Friday night that he had been called up to the big leagues for the first time.

"It's unbelievable," Grube said before Saturday night's game. "I'm still in shock. I've been choking up quite a bit today, with all the calls and text messages I've received from guys congratulating me."

Grube, who throws a fastball, slider and split-fingered changeup, will be the long man in the bullpen for the next week or so. It's not a plum assignment, but after toiling so long to get here, Grube is not about to complain.

"I had some doubts along the way, but I always tried to keep that glimmer of hope alive," said Grube, whose wife and parents flew to the Bay Area from Fort Wayne, Ind., Saturday. "I can't say I ever thought about giving up. . . . You think about [other career opportunities], but I didn't really have anything else lined up."

LeBlanc, 29, has a 4.53 ERA in 97 big league games with the San Diego Padres, Miami Marlins and the Angels, and his performance Friday night could prompt a team in need of starting pitching to claim him.

LeBlanc, who is out of minor league options, would have to clear waivers to remain in the organization and return to Salt Lake, where he went 5-1 with a 3.69 ERA in nine starts this season. There is also a chance the Angels could trade him.

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LeBlanc wouldn't have been available to the Angels until Tuesday, forcing them to finish the series with the A's with a six-man bullpen.

Soon after LeBlanc was designated for assignment, the Angels announced they would use Monday's off-day to skip Matt Shoemaker in the rotation, making Shoemaker available out of the bullpen.

But Shoemaker threw 73 pitches in Thursday night's win over the Seattle Mariners and is not available to pitch this weekend, so the Angels felt they needed immediate depth in case Saturday night starter Tyler Skaggs struggles early.

C.J. Wilson, Garrett Richards and Skaggs will start against the Houston Astros in Minute Maid Park Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Angels fall apart in 11-3 loss to Oakland

MIKE DIGIOVANNA

Athletics 11, Angels 3

KEY MOMENT: With the score tied, 3-3, in the seventh, Yoenis Cespedes fouled off two tough pitches from Angels setup man Joe Smith before lining a two-run triple to right for a 5-3 A's lead. Derek Norris walked, and Alberto Callaspo hit a two-run double to right to make it 7-3 and cap a six-run inning.

AT THE PLATE: The Angels loaded the bases with no outs in the first off A's left-hander Tommy Milone and failed to score. They bunched four singles in the second and didn't score. Collin Cowgill hit a three-run homer in the fourth, part of a three-hit night for the Angels outfielder. Cespedes added a three-run homer off Jarrett Grube in the eighth, matching his career high with five RBIs.

ON THE MOUND: Tyler Skaggs cruised through six innings, allowing one run and two hits, but Kyle Blanks lined his first pitch of the seventh over the left-center field wall, and Coco Crisp and Nick Punto singled, knocking Skaggs out of the game.

IN THE FIELD: The Angels learned this lesson: Don't run on Cespedes. The A's left fielder gunned down Chris lannetta and Kole Calhoun with one-hop throws to the plate in the second, becoming the first A's outfielder with two assists in an inning since Matt Stairs in 1996.

TROUT OUT: Center fielder Mike Trout was scratched because of upper-back stiffness. "It's not quite loose enough to where you want to risk further injury," said Manager Mike Scioscia, who was hopeful Trout could play Sunday.

ROSTER MOVE: Wade LeBlanc, who threw 61/3 innings in relief of struggling starter Garrett Richards on Friday, was designated for assignment so the Angels could call up a fresh arm from triple-A, Grube, a 32-year-old right-hander who made his major league debut Saturday.

REHAB REPORT: Josh Hamilton (bone bruise left thumb) went two for five with a double Saturday and is five for nine in two triple-A games. The left fielder is on track to be activated Tuesday in Houston.

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UP NEXT: Right-hander Jered Weaver (6-3, 2.99 ERA) will oppose Oakland right-hander Sonny Gray (5-1, 2.31 ERA) at Oakland Coliseum on Sunday at 1 p.m. On the air: FS West. Radio: 830.

Angels' Raul Ibanez helps C.J. Cron adjust to majors

MIKE DIGIOVANNA

If your job was threatened by a young hotshot, would you give pointers to the kid who could push you out the door?

Many would grapple with that question, but not Angels designated hitter Raul Ibanez, who has taken one road during his 17-year big-league career — the high one — and is not about to veer from it now, even as young slugger C.J. Cron has emerged as a more dangerous hitter.

"One of my pleasures in life is helping people," Ibanez said before the Angels' 11-3 loss Saturday night to the Oakland Athletics. "As human beings, we have a need and a longing to help others, it's how God created us. And C.J. is a great kid, a great hitter.

"I'm a big fan of his as a player and person."

Cron, a 24-year-old first baseman, hadn't spent much time as a DH before the Angels called him up from triple A on May 3. Ibanez, who turns 42 on Monday, has helped ease the transition to a role young players often struggle to grasp.

"I've picked his brain, and he's helped by showing me what he does to stay focused, to be prepared for every at-bat," Cron said. "Ever since spring training, Raul has been awesome. You can talk to him about anything, and he'll help you no matter what."

The right-handed-hitting Cron has been such a quick study, he has put the struggling Ibanez's job in jeopardy. Cron began Saturday with a .319 average, .580 slugging percentage, three home runs, 11 runs batted in and only 11 strikeouts in 69 at-bats over 22 games.

He was batting .409 (nine for 22) with runners in scoring position. Though he has been part of a DH platoon with Ibanez, he has hit right-handers (.324 in 34 at-bats) better than left-handers (.314 in 35 at-bats). Cron homered, tripled and hit two doubles against right-handers in recent games.

"I feel good, and I'm seeing the ball well," Cron said. "We've been winning, so that makes everything more fun. It helps keep me calm and comfortable."

Ibanez is batting .153 with a .268 on-base percentage, .282 slugging percentage, three home runs, 20 RBIs and 41 strikeouts, and the playing time he has lost to Cron and Grant Green is making it difficult to find his rhythm at the plate.

"That doesn't even factor into my mindset," Ibanez said. "It doesn't matter if you play every day or every three days, the job is still the same. Be ready, stay ready."

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Asked whether he remained confident in his ability to rebound from his sluggish start, Ibanez said, "Why wouldn't I be? You don't just lose your ability."

With cleanup batter Josh Hamilton expected back Tuesday from left-thumb injuries, there has been speculation that Ibanez might be released so the Angels could keep Cron and Green, who took a .368 average into Saturday's game.

But Manager Mike Scioscia said Saturday that Ibanez, who hit .242 with 29 home runs and 65 RBIs for Seattle last season, will remain with the club when Hamilton is activated.

"We want to give Raul every chance to get productive, and as long as he's making progress and contributing, we want to keep nurturing that," Scioscia said. "Cron and Green have earned at-bats because they've been very productive. But we feel Raul is part of the solution, and we'd like to play that out."

Parting with Ibanez now would sap the Angels of much-needed organizational depth from the left side.

Cron and Green both have minor league options, so either can be sent to tripleA without having to pass through waivers when Hamilton returns.

But if Ibanez, who is signed to a one-year, \$2.75-million contract that includes incentives that could push his salary to \$5 million, is still struggling at the All-Star break, the Angels might have no choice but to release him.

"There's not a calendar where you can put a red mark on a date," Scioscia said, when asked how much longer he could continue to play Ibanez.

"As much as he can contribute, we want to let it play out until there's a decision to be made.

"Right now, I think we're doing fine with the way we're mixing and matching. And as Josh gets back and there's not as much pressure on Raul to hit in the middle of the order, hopefully he can benefit by hitting in a different neighborhood."

FROM THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Angels' Grube, 32, gets first call-up after decade-plus in the minors

BY JEFF FLETCHER / STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND – Bad news for Wade LeBlanc turned out to be a dream come true for Jarrett Grube.

A day after he pitched 61/3 innings in relief to save the Angels bullpen, LeBlanc was designated for assignment because the Angels didn't feel they could operate with the bullpen shorthanded until he could pitch again.

That meant Grube, 32, whose 11-year minor league odyssey included a stop in independent ball, got his first call-up to the major leagues.

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"I'm still in shock," Grube said. "I have been choking up quite a bit. A lot of people have been texting me and calling me and saying congrats. It brings it all back from the beginning. It's a pretty awesome feeling."

The Angels are the third organization for Grube, who was originally a 10th-round pick by the Colorado Rockies. In his second season with the Angels, he had a 3.52 ERA at Triple-A Salt Lake City.

In 2010, after recovering from an elbow injury, he pitched in the independent Atlantic League to show he was healthy.

While he was waiting for the call to the majors, he said doubts crept into his mind.

"You try to keep that glimmer of hope alive," Grube said. "It's the reason you play, to get to the majors. I can't say I had given up, but there are definitely small thoughts like that. You try to ignore them."

Grube said the support of his wife helped him keep going. She was the first one he called when he got the news after Salt Lake City's extra-inning game on Friday in Tacoma.

Unfortunately, she missed his first few calls because she was asleep back in Indiana. It was around 3 a.m. when he finally woke her up to give her the news. On Saturday, she and her mother flew across the country to Oakland for the Angels game. Grube said his parents were hoping to make it in time for Sunday's game.

The big event for the Grube family was made possible because Garrett Richards got only two outs in his start Friday, leaving LeBlanc to work the equivalent of a full start out of the bullpen. LeBlanc would not have been available to pitch again until Tuesday or Wednesday, at the earliest, and Scioscia said the Angels couldn't afford to have their bullpen be shorthanded for that long.

Even though Matt Shoemaker would have been available for a couple of innings starting Sunday, because his start was pushed back with Monday's off day, Scioscia said that wasn't enough coverage for Saturday.

The cost of the move is that LeBlanc, who was out of options, now could be lost to the organization. LeBlanc has to clear waivers to return to the Angels' Triple-A team. The Angels also might be able to trade him, perhaps acquiring another starting pitcher in return.

"We hope Wade stays with us," Scioscia said. "We'd love him to go down there and continue to pitch. But just like any other pitcher, if there's a big league job, guys are going to pursue it."

TROUT OUT

Mike Trout was a scratched from the Angels lineup because of upper back stiffness, but the Angels are hoping he'll be able to return Sunday.

Scioscia said Trout started feeling something in his back Saturday morning. He was penciled in the lineup as the DH when Scioscia hoped it would loosen up during pregame drills, but later he was scratched entirely.

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It's the second game in 10 days that Trout has missed because of his health. He sat out May 21 because of a tight hamstring.

NOTES

Josh Hamilton started a second consecutive game for Salt Lake City. He went 2 for 5 with a double and is 4 for 9 this weekend. Hamilton, who had two hits in his first game Friday night, could return to the Angels by Tuesday. ... Hector Santiago, who gave up one run in 51/3 innings in his second start at Triple-A on Friday, is not a candidate to start the next time the Angels need a fifth starter, next weekend, Scioscia said. Scioscia also said the Angels aren't yet looking at using Santiago out of the bullpen – they have no lefties now, and Sean Burnett is out for the season – but he didn't rule it out for later in the season.

Mike Trout sits with tight back; LeBlanc gets DFA'd

Posted by Jeff Fletcher

OAKLAND -- The Angels will be without Mike Trout for their 7 p.m. game against the first-place Oakland A's. Trout showed up to the ballpark today with upper back tightness, Manager Mike Scioscia said.

"We were going to try to see if he could go out there and swing, but it's just not quite loose enough to where you want him to risk any further injury," Scioscia said. "Hopefully it's something that quiets down and he'll be ready to go tomorrow."

It's the second time in the past 10 days that Trout has missed a game because of his health. He sat out May 21 because of a tight hamstring.

Trout, who had been in a slump for much of May, has an 11-game hitting streak in which he's hit .415 with three homers.

The Angels also made a somewhat surprising move today, designating left-hander Wade LeBlanc for assignment a day after he bailed out the bullpen by pitching 6 1/3 innings of relief following Garrett Richards' short outing.

LeBlanc, who is out of options, could be lost to the Angels if another team claims him on waivers.

Scisocia explained that the Angels didn't have the bullpen coverage they needed for today's game if they would have kept LeBlanc, who would be unable to pitch for at least three days. Even though the other six pitchers would all have been available, none of them could go more than two innings, which could have created a problem if starter Tyler Skaggs got knocked out early.

Matt Shoemaker, whose next turn in the rotation has been pushed back because of Monday's off day, could have provided some help in the bullpen starting on Sunday, but Scioscia said it was not enough. "We needed the depth," he said.

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The benefactor of the move was right-hander Jarrett Grube, a 32-year-old who was recalled to the majors for the first time. Grube has a 3.52 ERA in 11 starts for Triple-A Salt Lake City. He last pitched on Tuesday, so he's fully rested if the Angels need a long man out of the bullpen.

As for Shoemaker, he has not yet been penciled back into the rotation, but the Angels will need a fifth starter by next Saturday. The Angels will start C.J. Wilson, Garrett Richards and Skaggs in the series starting Tuesday in Houston. Jered Weaver, who is starting on Sunday in Oakland, would be available to pitch on Friday, the opener of a series at home against the Chicago White Sox.

In other news, Josh Hamilton came through Friday night's rehab game fine, and he's scheduled to play again tonight for Salt Lake City in Albuquerque. Scioscia said the earliest Hamilton would return to the Angels is Tuesday, in Houston.

Angels undone by Cespedes' arm, bat in 11-3 loss to A's

BY JEFF FLETCHER / STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND – Here's the summary of the Angels' 11-3 loss to the Oakland A's on Saturday night. Yoenis Cespedes.

The Angels dropped the second game of their series against the first-place A's because Cespedes beat them with his arm and bat.

Cespedes keyed a six-run seventh inning that turned a game the Angels had led 3-1. He added a three-run homer in the eighth.

"We should have had this game," Angels starter Tyler Skaggs said. "It's frustrating. We come back to the field tomorrow and start all over again. We're not going to hang our heads in here. There is a lot more baseball to be played. We'll be coming for them."

They'll need to come after Cespedes a little more effectively.

The Angels challenged his arm twice in the second inning, and both times he nailed runners at the plate, contributing to the rarity of the Angels getting no runs in a four-hit inning.

But his biggest blow came in the seventh inning. The A's tied the score, 3-3, on Josh Donaldson's groundout, and Cespedes was at the plate against Joe Smith.

Cespedes fell behind 1-2, fouling off three pitches in the process. Smith had been pitching him inside and Cespedes had been taking what Mike Scioscia called "bad swings."

Smith then shook off catcher Chris lannetta twice on the 1-2 pitch. He shook off an inside fastball and then a slider, finally settling on a fastball away.

"It was a stupid pitch," Smith said. "I should have stayed in there."

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Smith left the fastball up and Cespedes drilled onto the right-field warning track for a two-run triple.

After that, Smith issued a walk and then gave up a two-run double to former Angel Alberto Callaspo, putting the game on ice for the A's.

"I lost the game," Smith said. "After that inning everything went awry. Two outs and everything goes downhill. It just kept going that way. It turns into a horrible loss when it was a great tight ballgame."

Even before the late-inning explosion by the A's, there were dubious signs for the Angels because they were wasting scoring opportunities. They had some poor at-bats with runners in scoring position, but they also blistered some balls that found gloves.

The most glaring empty inning was the second, when Cespedes threw out two runners at the plate.

Scioscia, who believed that A's catcher Derek Norris violated the new rule about blocking the plate on both of them, nonetheless gave Cespedes credit.

"He made two really strong throws," Scioscia said. "Those throws were right on the money."

Angels Afterthoughts: Question at the plate

Posted by Jeff Fletcher

OAKLAND – Mike Scioscia is still confused about the new rule regulating whether catchers can block the plate.

The Angels' manager said he believed that both of the runners they had thrown out at the plate in the second inning on Saturday night should have been called safe because catcher Derek Norris had been blocking the plate without the ball.

"That blocking the plate rule needs to be better defined," Scioscia said. "According to the guidelines we didn't have a lane, but they gave it to him."

The new experimental rule states that a catcher can't be blocking the plate, without the ball, "as (the runner) is attempting to score."

The issue is when does "attempting to score" begin?

In both cases on Saturday, Norris was clearly blocking the plate before the he had the ball, but he had the ball by the time the runner arrived.

"There's a lot of gray area, a lot of interpretation of that rule," Scioscia said. "Hopefully as we get more experience, there's more clarity."

TALE OF TWO WALKS

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Scioscia had two opportunities to issue an intentional walk while the heart of the A's order was up in the critical seventh inning. He did it once, in a somewhat surprising situation, and didn't a second time, and got burned.

The first came with runners at second and third and Jed Lowrie, a switch-hitter, up against right-hander Joe Smith, with one out in a game the Angels led 3-2.

Scioscia said if they'd pitched to Lowrie, they'd have had to play the infield in, and that would have allowed too much room for a hit to squeak through and plate two runs. So he walked Lowrie to load the bases for MVP candidate Josh Donaldson, allowing them to play the infield at double play depth.

Smith got Donaldson to hit the ground ball he wanted, but it was hit too slowly and the Angels could only get one, as the tying run scored.

That brought up Yoenis Cespedes, with first base open, and Norris up next. Scioscia said he considered walking Cespedes, but he wanted to to leave the base open so Smith had the leeway to try to get Cespedes to chase a pitch out of the zone. Smith left a 1-2 fastball over the plate and Cespedes hammered it for a two-run triple.

ALSO...

You often hear managers and players lamenting a night when they hit the ball hard and just don't get them to drop, but in this case the Angels had every right to curse their bad luck. C.J. Cron in particular blistered the ball three times and had nothing to show for it. Kole Calhoun and Grant Green, twice, also made very loud outs...

The Angels are looking to see how Dane De La Rosa feels and how his stuff looks more than they are the results in his rehab assignment at Triple-A Salt Lake City. That being said, he's allowed single runs in each of the past three innings he's pitched, including one on Saturday night...

Craig Gentry stole second with the A's up by five runs in the eighth, but Scioscia said he had no issue with it. He said the A's were simply "playing baseball" and "trying to protect their bullpen." The A's used their top two relievers on Friday night, so it they obviously wanted to pad the lead enough to avoid using them on Saturday.

On deck: Angels at Athletics, Sunday, 1 p.m.

By JEFF FLETCHER / STAFF WRITER

Where: O.co Coliseum

TV: Fox Sports West, 1 p.m.

Did you know: Oddly, C.J. Cron was hitting .190 when ahead in the count and .379 when behind in the count, heading into Saturday's game.

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THE PITCHERS

RHP JERED WEAVER (6-3, 2.99)

Weaver's impressive career numbers against the A's pale in comparison to the run he's been on the past few years. Since 2011, Weaver is 8-1 with an 0.87 ERA against the A's. The current A's have a combined career .169 average against Weaver. Weaver has not pitched in Oakland since Aug. 6, 2012, when he threw a shutout.

Vs. Oakland: 11-7, 2.23

At O.co Coliseum: 5-4, 3.16

Loves to face: Coco Crisp, 8 for 50 (.160)

RHP SONNY GRAY (5-1, 2.31)

The latest in the A's long line of pitching phenoms, Gray, 24, started just 10 games last season, but he was impressive enough to earn two playoff starts. He had a 2.08 ERA in two games in the division series. This season he earned the opening day start, and he's done nothing to diminish his reputation as one of the game's best young pitchers.

Vs. Angels: 0-0, 1.13

At O.co Coliseum: 5-2, 2.63

FROM ANGELS.COM

Stiff back sidelines Trout against Oakland

By Alden Gonzalez / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Angels center fielder Mike Trout woke up Saturday morning with tightness around the middle of his back. He tried to loosen it up throughout the early afternoon at O.co Coliseum and never could, ultimately getting scratched from the starting lineup and missing his second game of the season.

Trout said he'll come into Sunday's 1:05 p.m. PT series finale against the A's "looking to play." Asked after Saturday's 11-3 loss if he's confident he can, Trout responded: "Oh yeah. It's night and day from what it was."

Angels manager Mike Scioscia originally had Trout in at designated hitter, then took him out entirely after he spent all of pregame laid up on the athletic trainer's table. The 22-year-old superstar was fine Friday, going 2-for-5 with a homer to straightaway center field in a 9-5 loss, but didn't even come out for pregame batting practice the following day.

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Trout -- with a .294/.380/.549 slash line on the year -- was also bothered by a tight left hamstring earlier this week, which prompted him to start at designated hitter against the Astros on May 20 and miss the May 21 series finale for precautionary reasons.

"We were going to try to see if he could go out there and swing, but it's just not quite loose enough to where you want him to risk any further injury," said Scioscia, who put Grant Green in Trout's place at the No. 2 spot. "Hopefully it's something that quiets down and he'll be ready to go tomorrow."

LeBlanc designated for assignment by Angels

OAKLAND -- The Angels needed some length out of the bullpen Saturday and Sunday, and that may cost them some organizational starting-pitching depth.

Left-hander Wade LeBlanc was designated for assignment Saturday, one day after a bullpen-saving performance in a 9-5 loss to the A's, and journeyman Minor Leaguer Jarrett Grube was called up to take his place on the roster.

LeBlanc, out of options, gave up four runs in 6 1/3 innings Friday while in relief of Garrett Richards, who allowed five runs before recording the third out of the first inning. Now the Angels risk losing LeBlanc off waivers, unable to send him back to Triple-A unless 29 other teams pass up a chance to add him to their big league roster.

"We hope Wade stays with us," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "We'd love him to go down there and continue to pitch. But just like any other pitcher, if there's a big league job, guys are going to pursue it."

The Angels are off Monday and will start C.J. Wilson, Richards and Tyler Skaggs in the upcoming three-game series in Houston. That means Matt Shoemaker is being pushed back and could start as late as next Saturday against the White Sox, withJered Weaver -- starting Sunday's series finale against the A's - taking his next turn on normal rest the previous Friday.

Scioscia wouldn't reveal his rotation for the weekend series against the White Sox, but Shoemaker -- two days removed from pitching 5 1/3 innings in Seattle -- isn't available out of the bullpen in the second of a three-game set in Oakland and can't provide much length in the series finale.

Grube -- a 32-year-old right-hander with a 3.52 ERA in 11 starts at Triple-A Salt Lake -- is in the Majors for the first time to provide coverage until Monday's off-day.

And LeBlanc -- 29, and with a 3.69 ERA in nine Triple-A starts -- is now there for the taking.

"It's really bad timing for Wade, but it meets our team's need," Scioscia said. "Last night, we had a short start obviously, and [LeBlanc] had to throw a lot. We just need some coverage and length here today and tomorrow, so we needed to get a fresh arm up here."

Grube's persistence pays off with first callup

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OAKLAND -- After stints with three different organizations, a brief stop in independent ball and 11 seasons in professional baseball, 32-year-old right-hander Jarrett Grube has finally reached the big leagues, called up by the Angels on Saturday when lefty Wade LeBlanc was designated for assignment.

"Unbelievable," Grube said. "I'm still in shock. I have been choking up quite a bit. A lot of people have been texting me and calling me and saying congrats. It brings it all back from the beginning. It's a pretty awesome feeling."

Grube, called up to temporarily provide length out of the bullpen, was drafted by the Rockies in the 10th round of the 2004 First-Year Player Draft, made a combined 24 appearances (20 starts) in independent ball from 2009-10, pitched in the Mariners' organization for a couple of years and was signed by the Angels as a Minor League free agent in July 2012.

The Indiana product had a 3.52 ERA in 11 starts for Triple-A Salt Lake this year, posting a 1.14 WHIP (walks plus hits per innings pitched) and a 2.83 strikeout-to-walk ratio in 61 1/3 innings. For his professional career, he has a 4.14 ERA, a 1.34 WHIP and a 2.82 strikeout-to-walk ratio.

Angels manager Mike Scioscia said he has "a nice running fastball-slider combination."

Grube's wife and her mother traveled from Fort Wayne, Ind., to make it in time for Saturday's game, and his parents are slated to be here Sunday. Grube was charting pitches for Friday's extra-inning game in Tacoma, Wash., when Salt Lake Bees pitching coach Erik Bennett waved him over with a stern look on his face, ultimately telling him he was going to the Majors.

"I thought I messed the chart up," said Grube, who made his Major League debut in the eighth inning of Saturday's 11-3 loss and surrendered a three-run homer to Yoenis Cespedes. "They kind of twisted it. It was pretty cool."

It would've been easy for Grube to give up along the way, but somewhere in the back of his mind, he knew he'd ultimately regret it, because he's fought for so long.

"You try to keep that glimmer of hope alive," Grube said. "It's the reason you play, to get to the Majors. I can't say I had given up, but there are definitely small thoughts like that. You try to ignore them."

Worth noting

- Josh Hamilton went 2-for-5 while leading off and playing left field for Triple-A Salt Lake on Saturday night, hitting a single and a double and also striking out in his second game since restarting his rehab assignment. Hamilton, 4-for-9 since returning from a bone bruise in his surgically repaired left thumb, looks on track to be activated by Tuesday's series opener in Houston.
- Scioscia acknowledged that Hector Santiago "threw better" in his second start for Triple-A Salt Lake on Friday, giving up one run in 5 1/3 innings after surrendering five runs in 2 2/3 innings five days earlier. But Santiago will make at least one more start in the Minors and won't reclaim his rotation spot for the three-game series against the White Sox next weekend.

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Umpires' review doesn't help Angels on play at plate

Scioscia feels A's catcher Norris blocked Iannetta's path, but call stands

By Alden Gonzalez / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Angels manager Mike Scioscia was under the impression that A's catcher Derek Norris illegally blocked home plate during one of Yoenis Cespedes' two outfield assists in the top of the second Saturday, but umpires confirmed the initial out call via a crew-chief review and ruled Chris lannetta out.

"Again, that blocking-the-plate rule needs to be better defined," Scioscia said after the Angels' 11-3 loss. "Because according to the guidelines, we didn't have a lane. But they gave it to him."

With runners on first and second and none out against A's lefty Tommy Milone, Angels outfielder Collin Cowgill smacked a line-drive single to left field, but Cespedes charged hard and his throw beat lannetta. Scioscia argued that Norris had his left foot in lannetta's path to home plate before quickly removing it upon fielding the throw, ultimately convincing umpires to conduct a crew-chief review that didn't confirm Scioscia's point.

The new rule, adopted in 2014, states that "the catcher cannot block the pathway of the runner as he is attempting to score," unless the throw takes him there. Norris' violation appeared subtle, but Scioscia felt it should've been enough for an overturned call.

"You have to have the ball to be in that lane or have the throw take you there," Scioscia said, "but he was set up in that lane from the replay I saw. There's a lot of gray area, a lot of interpretation in that rule, and hopefully, as we get more experience with this, there's going to be more clarity in it."

Angels stung by A's big seventh inning

Skaggs, Smith combine to allow six runs in go-ahead frame

By Alden Gonzalez / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Chris lannetta called for a sinker inside on Yoenis Cespedes, and Joe Smith shook him off, opting to go away from his signature pitch. He called for the slider, No. 2 in Smith's repertoire, and the Angels sidearm reliever shook his head again, waiting for lannetta to signal the outside-corner fastball he finally got the sign for on the very next exchange.

"It was a stupid pitch," Smith said after Cespedes lined the offering to right field for a two-run triple that gave the A's their first lead and ultimately turned Saturday's game into an 11-3 rout.

The Angels were nine outs away from a win over their first-place division rivals, sporting a two-run lead and lining the game up perfectly for the back end of their bullpen, until the mighty A's took their hacks and plated a combined 10 runs in the seventh and eighth innings.

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The Angels are now 30-24 on the year, but only 10-14 against the American League West and 1-4 against the A's, who have taken the first two of this three-game series and lead them by 3 1/2 games in the division.

"We should've won the game today," Angels starter Tyler Skaggs said. "It's frustrating. We come back to the field tomorrow and start all over again. We're not going to hang our heads in here. There's still a lot more baseball to be played. We play them a lot more, so we'll be coming for them."

On Friday night, after Garrett Richards surrendered five runs before recording a third out, Josh Donaldson took over, homering twice, driving in another run with a single and robbing Erick Aybar of an RBI with a diving stop down the third-base line.

On Saturday night, it was all Cespedes, who threw two runners out at home plate in the top of the second, fell a single short of the cycle and drove in five runs.

His seventh-inning at-bat opened the floodgates.

Skaggs exited with runners on first and second, none out and a one-run lead, giving up a solo homer to Kyle Blanks and back-to-back singles to Coco Crisp and Nick Punto to start the bottom of the seventh.

After a Craig Gentry sacrifice bunt, Angels manager Mike Scioscia ordered Smith to intentionally walk Jed Lowrie (.194 hitter in May) to face Donaldson (.940 OPS all year).

Smith got the ground ball he was looking for, but it was hit too softly to turn an inning-ending double play and wound up bringing in the tying run.

Then, with runners on second and third and two outs, his 1-2, up-and-away fastball to Cespedes sailed just over the outstretched glove of Kole Calhoun in right field.

"It hit the tip of the glove," said Calhoun, who wears a 12 3/4-inch glove and jokingly said he "might switch to a 13 1/2-inch glove now."

"I saw it pretty good, I thought I had a pretty good read on it," Calhoun added. "He hit that ball well."

Asked if he had any thought of walking Cespedes with first base open, Scioscia said, "We looked at it, but I wanted to give Joe a chance to have freedom to expand on Cespedes if he could, because when Joe's got it, he's really tough on righties."

Two batters later, Alberto Callaspo hit a two-run double down the right-field line to expand Oakland's lead to four. Then, in the eighth, Gentry hit an RBI single against Michael Kohn and Cespedes lifted a three-run homer against Jarrett Grube, the 32-year-old Minor League journeyman who was called up to the Major Leagues for the first time.

"He was hitting a buck-10 over the last 10 games, or whatever it was, and then when we needed him he steps up," A's manager Bob Melvin said of Cespedes, who entered with three hits in his previous 26 atbats. "All the festivities, everything going on before, fans are out in full force doing their thing, and then all of a sudden he just becomes a different player."

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The Angels and A's played three games that were all decided by one run from April 14-16 at Angel Stadium, but the Angels have been outscored by 12 in the first two games of this series, which will end with Jered Weaver matching up against Sonny Gray.

Without Mike Trout, who was scratched with tightness in his back, they had a chance to pull away against Tommy Milone early, but they failed to score despite loading the bases with none out in the first, were thrown out at home twice by Cespedes twice in the second, then watched it all slip away in the end.

"They played us tough this year, Seattle's played us tough, but I think the bottom line in this with us is we're still evolving as a team," Scioscia said. "They're a good team over there. You have to play at a high level, but we're going to have a chance to match up with them and get it done."

A's, Angels aces set to clash in series finale

Gray looking to help Oakland sweep Weaver's Halos

By Aaron Leibowitz / MLB.com

Sonny Gray and Jered Weaver will square off Sunday afternoon in the marquee pitching matchup of a three-game series between the A's and Angels.

After Saturday's 11-3 victory, the A's own a 3 1/2-game lead over Los Angeles in the American League West, where the Angels are attempting to deny Oakland its third straight division crown.

Right-handers Gray and Weaver have been the aces of their respective staffs so far in 2014. Gray, in his first full big league season, is second in the American League with a 2.31 ERA, while Weaver's 2.99 ERA ranks ninth.

Gray is coming off his worst start of the season, a six-inning, four-run effort against the Tigers. It was the first time this year he had allowed more than three earned runs and just the third time in his 21-start career.

Weaver, meanwhile, is 6-1 with a 2.01 ERA over his last eight starts, and even though he didn't have his best stuff against the Mariners on Tuesday, he still managed to pitch six innings of three-run ball to get the win.

"Probably not as sharp as I had been in my previous starts," he said. "In the bullpen, just didn't feel right. I was leaving stuff up, and I was hoping it'd be one of those days when it wasn't right in the bullpen and it'd be a little better out there.

"I struggled a little bit early on. Fastball command got better as the game went on. Luckily the twoseamer into lefties was starting to work later in the game. I felt all right for the most part, but didn't feel as crisp as I have in previous starts. Just one of those games when you had to battle."

Weaver has a 2.23 ERA in 26 career starts against the A's and a 3.16 ERA in 14 career starts in Oakland.

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Angels: Trout expects to return Sunday

Center fielder Mike Trout was a late scratch from Saturday's lineup due to stiffness in his middle back that was giving him a hard time rotating, but he said he plans to return to action for Sunday's series finale.

"Oh yeah," Trout responded after Saturday's game when asked if he was confident he could play Sunday. "It's night and day from what it was."

Angels manager Mike Scioscia originally had Trout in at designated hitter vs. the A's, then took him out entirely after he spent all of pregame laid up on the athletic trainers' table. The 22-year-old superstar was fine Friday, going 2-for-5 with a homer to straightaway center field in a 9-5 loss, but he woke up feeling stiff and got his second day off this season.

"We were going to try to see if he could go out there and swing, but it's just not quite loose enough to where you want him to risk any further injury," said Scioscia, who put Grant Green in Trout's place at the No. 2 spot. "Hopefully it's something that quiets down and he'll be ready to go tomorrow."

A's: Moss day to day with calf strain

Brandon Moss, who hit his first career grand slam Friday and leads Oakland with 46 RBIs, was held out of the lineup Saturday with a strained right calf.

Manager Bob Melvin said Moss could also miss Sunday's series finale, which would give him three days to rest including an off-day Monday.

"We'll see tomorrow -- most likely probably not, give him through the off-day," Melvin said Saturday. "I don't want to get ahead of myself. We'll see how he's doing tomorrow."

Moss began experiencing pain in the calf Friday when he ran out to the field for the top of the third inning.

Kyle Blanks, whom the A's acquired from the Padres in a trade May 15, replaced Moss at first base Friday and got the start there Saturday, hitting a solo homer to lead off the A's six-run seventh inning.

Worth noting:

- Heading into Saturday's game, the Angels (30-24) had a five-game improvement after 54 games from a season ago, giving them the largest increase in the AL.
- Sean Doolittle, who was named the A's closer May 20, has not allowed a run over his last 13 1/3 frames. He has 35 strikeouts and just one walk in 2014.
- The Angels are 10-14 against AL West teams and 20-11 against everybody else.

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FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mike Trout (back stiffness) scratched

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Los Angeles Angels slugger Mike Trout has been scratched from the lineup against the Oakland Athletics because of upper back stiffness.

Trout was initially batting second as the designated hitter instead of his usual spot in center field Saturday night. Manager Mike Scioscia says Trout is not sure how the injury occurred but it started bothering him earlier Saturday.

C.J. Cron was the new designated hitter and batting sixth. Grant Green moved up from sixth to second in the order.

Trout is batting .294 with 11 home runs and 38 RBIs this season.

Yoenis Cespedes one single shy of cycle in win over Angels

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. -- With the bat and with his arm, Yoenis Cespedes put on the best all-around performance of his career in front of a rare sellout crowd at the Oakland Coliseum.

Cespedes finished a single shy of the cycle and threw out two runners at the plate, powering the Athletics past the Los Angeles Angels 11-3 on Saturday night in front of 35,067 fans.

"I got a lot of motivation when I see the field like that," Cespedes said through an interpreter in Spanish. "The stands are full, the same thing when we were in the playoffs. It was sold out and they made me feel like a stronger mind and gave me a lot of motivation."

In front of just the fourth sellout crowd of the season in Oakland, Cespedes gave quite a show.

The reigning Home Run Derby champion doubled in the fourth, hit a triple in the seventh that scored the go-ahead runs and added a three-run homer in the eighth. He matched a career high with five RBIs to help the two-time defending AL West champions stretch their lead to 3 1/2 games over the Angels in the division.

"No doubt about it," A's manager Bob Melvin said when asked if Cespedes feeds off the roaring home crowds. "He just becomes a different player."

Collin Cowgill's three-run homer off Tommy Milone in the fourth accounted for all of the Angels' runs. The A's tagged Tyler Skaggs (4-3) with four runs and five hits in six-plus innings.

Fernando Rodriguez (1-0) tossed one scoreless inning for the win.

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Milone allowed nine hits in six innings, striking out three and walking one. He labored most of the way -- including escaping a bases-loaded jam with no outs in the first -- but got a big boost from his strong-armed, green glove-wearing left fielder on nearly identical plays in the second inning.

Cespedes charged in and heaved a one-hop strike to catcher Derek Norris to nab Chris Iannetta and Kole Calhoun after line-drive singles. The throws sent fans roaring to their feet each time, and Cespedes received high-fives and head-pats from teammates and coaches in the dugout.

"He had a career night. I'm lucky that it was today," Milone said.

Crew chief Fieldin Culbreth upheld the first call after a 2-minute, 30-second review to see if Norris illegally blocked the plate under the new collision rule. Angels manager Mike Scioscia said lannetta didn't have a lane to slid and the rule needs to be more clearly defined.

There was no review or challenge on the second play to get Calhoun.

"Knew it was going to be bang-bang and he's got a great arm," Calhoun said. "I thought I had a good jump. I thought it'd be closer than what it was, but that was a great play by him."

Cespedes came back big time with the bat. He doubled with one out in the fourth for Oakland's first hit, and Norris drove in a run on a flyout for Oakland's first run.

After Kyle Blanks' solo homer and Josh Donaldson's RBI groundout tied the score in the seventh, Cespedes' drive off reliever Joe Smith landed just over Calhoun's glove in right to score the go-ahead runs. Cespedes later lined a three-run shot in Jarrett Grube's major league debut in the eighth.

It was Cespedes' 10th home run this season. He also had five RBIs at Cleveland on May 18.

Game notes

The A's honored the 1974 World Series championship team before the game. Three World Series MVPs - Gene Tenace ('72), Reggie Jackson ('73) and Rollie Fingers ('74) -- threw out ceremonial first pitches. ... Angels All-Star CF Mike Trout was scratched from the lineup because of upper back stiffness. He was initially the designated hitter. ... A's RF Josh Reddick was replaced by pinch-hitter Coco Crisp after hyperextending his knee catching a fly at the wall in the seventh. He is day to day. ... Oakland 1B Brandon Moss was not in the lineup. He will likely sit out again Sunday to give his nagging right calf additional rest. ... The Angels designated LHP Wade LeBlanc for assignment and called up Grube from Triple-A Salt Lake. ... Angels ace Jered Weaver (6-3, 2.99 ERA) starts against Oakland's Sonny Gray (5-1, 2.31) in Sunday's series finale.

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Angels-Athletics Preview

By JORDAN GARRETSON (STATS Writer) AP - Sports

Though abysmal pitching has cost the Los Angeles Angels the first two games of their series with the Oakland Athletics, Jered Weaver might be the perfect pitcher to help them thwart a sweep.

Weaver looks to continue his mastery of Oakland on Sunday as the Angels try to avoid their first three-game skid since the beginning of the season.

The Angels (30-25) have mostly their pitching to blame for the losses in a 3-5 stretch, during which they own a 5.13 ERA. Starter Garrett Richards was blasted for five runs in just two-thirds of an inning in Friday's 9-5 loss.

Tyler Skaggs allowed four runs in six innings Saturday, but relievers Joe Smith and Michael Kohn were each charged with three runs in less than an inning. Oakland scored six runs in the seventh and four in the eighth in an 11-3 victory.

Los Angeles hasn't dropped three in a row since being swept at home by Seattle from March 31-April 2.

Weaver's performances against the Athletics over the last three years likely give the Angels some confidence. He's 8-1 with a 0.87 ERA in his last 11 matchups, including wins in four straight while surrendering one run over 29 2-3 innings. He threw a four-hit shutout in his last game in Oakland on Aug. 6, 2012.

The only Athletic hitting better than .235 in at least five at-bats against Weaver (6-3, 2.99 ERA) is Eric Sogard, who is 4 for 14. Josh Donaldson, whose 46 RBIs are tied with Brandon Moss for the team lead, is hitless in eight at-bats against Weaver.

The right-hander was less than stellar in a 6-4 win at Seattle on Tuesday, allowing three runs over six innings - the first time in eight starts he gave up more than two runs. However, he's still 6-1 with a 2.01 ERA over his last eight outings. That's the second-lowest ERA in the AL since April 18, trailing only Minnesota's Phil Hughes (1.94).

Yoenis Cespedes was a single shy of a cycle and matched a career high with five RBIs on Saturday to help Oakland (34-22) expand its division lead over the Angels to 3 1/2 games.

The A's will give the ball to Sonny Gray (5-1, 2.31), who didn't receive a decision after being charged with a season-high four runs along with eight hits over six innings of a 6-5 loss to Detroit on Tuesday.

"I've got to be a little bit better than that," said Gray, whose ERA trails only Masahiro Tanaka (2.06) of the New York Yankees in the AL.

Gray limited the Angels to a run on a Mike Trout homer over six innings but failed to get a decision in a 2-1 win Sept. 17 in his only start against them as a rookie. He also threw two scoreless innings of relief July 19.

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Trout was a late scratch Saturday due to upper back stiffness, though manager Mike Scioscia told the team's official website he was hopeful Trout would be able to play Sunday. Trout's batting .415 with 10 RBIs during an 11-game hitting streak.

Moss likely won't play Sunday, Oakland manager Bob Melvin told the team's website, after he sat Saturday. Moss hit a grand slam Friday but later left with a tight right calf.

A's outfielder Josh Reddick left Saturday's game after hyperextending his knee while fielding a flyball and is day to day.

FROM THE 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.

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"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.

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--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:

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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.

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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

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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.

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--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

Team Report – HOUSTON ASTROS

INSIDE PITCH

HOUSTON With the Astros set to complete one trip through their current six-man starting rotation on Sunday, left-hander Brett Oberholtzer made a strong bid to remain in the rotation by limiting the Baltimore Orioles to one run on four hits over seven innings in Houston's 2-1 win.

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After allowing six earned runs in back-to-back starts to close April, Oberholtzer has surrendered just three earned runs over 13 innings since being recalled from Triple-A Oklahoma City. He has tossed a total of just 178 pitches during those two starts, issuing just one walk while allowing 10 hits and striking out nine. He has won both of those starts.

The Astros are experiencing a welcome glut of exceptional starting pitching, with left-hander Dallas Keuchel a solid candidate for American League Pitcher of the Month honors starting Saturday. Right-handed ace Scott Feldman is entrenched while right-handers Collin McHugh and Jarred Cosart appear to be sure bets to remain in the rotation. Another right-hander, Brad Peacock, had produced over his last three starts.

"When you have good players those are not hard decisions," Astros manager Bo Porter said of paring down the rotation.

"He (Oberholtzer) threw the ball tremendous. If you can pitch and you're putting up zeroes, we'll find some place for you to pitch.

NOTES, QUOTES

RECORD: 24-32

STREAK: Won seven

NEXT: Orioles (RHP Chris Tillman, 4-2, 4.69 ERA) at Astros (LHP Dallas Keuchel, 6-2, 2.55 ERA)

PLAYER NOTES:

LHP Brett Oberholtzer tossed seven strong innings, allowing one run on four hits and no walks with one strikeout. By tossing just 81 pitches, he became the first Houston pitcher to work at least seven innings with that pitch count since RHP Bud Norris did so against Philadelphia on Sept. 14, 2011. Oberholtzer is 2-0 with a 2.08 ERA in two starts since being recalled from Triple-A Oklahoma City.

SS Jonathan Villar snapped an 0-for-26 skid with his RBI double in the seventh inning, a game-winning hit that plated LF Robbie Grossman from second base. Villar walked in his first plate appearance and was the only Houston starter to reach base twice against Orioles RHP Miguel Gonzalez. Villar is now batting .200/.260/.369 on the season.

2B Jose Altuve finished 1-for-4 and increased his league-leading hit total to 77 with his single in the sixth inning, an infield hit that ended the no-hit bid of Orioles RHP Miguel Gonzalez. Altuve is two hits shy of matching Lance Berkman with 79 hits through the end of May, a feat Berkman pulled in 2008. Altuve also added his American League-leading 20th stolen base.

RHP Chad Qualls notched his fifth save by recording the final four outs, earning his second save of the series. He stretched his scoreless streak to 14 appearances and 12.2 innings dating to April 21. He is 4-for-4 in save opportunities over that span.

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QUOTE TO NOTE:

"Extremely happy for him and (LF Robbie) Grossman. Both of them have been kind of scuffling, and for them to be the two offensive heroes tonight, it definitely feels good. I'm sure they both feel good about it as well. They've been working extremely hard and to be able to come through for the team tonight, especially with two outs and after a poor base-running decision, to pick the team up, that's what teamwork is all about." Manager Bo Porter, of SS Jonathan Villar, who snapped an 0-for-26 skid with his game-winning RBI double in the seventh inning that scored LF Robbie Grossman from second base.

ROSTER REPORT

MEDICAL WATCH:

RHP Brad Peacock (right forearm soreness) was scratched from his scheduled start May 23. He threw a bullpen session May 24, and he started May 29.

RHP Jesse Crain (right biceps surgery in October 2013) went on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to March 21 and transferred to the 60-day DL on May 2. He was shut down as of April 25 due to bursitis, pushing back the timetable for his return. He was throwing off flat ground as of May 6. He threw a bullpen session May 22. He might begin a rehab assignment in mid-June with an eye toward coming off the DL in late June.

RHP Anthony Bass (right intercostal strain) went on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to May 11. He was rehabbing in Florida as of May 29

RHP Jose Cisnero (right elbow discomfort) went on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to May 7. He underwent season-ending Tommy John surgery May 28.

RHP Matt Albers (right shoulder stiffness) went on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to April 22. Albers threw a short bullpen session on May 4. He threw a 25-pitch bullpen session May 6. Albers was unable to throw a simulated game as scheduled May 9, and he was shut down as of May 12. He remained in Houston when the Astros went on the road May 19. He was rehabbing in Florida as of May 29.

RHP Alex White (Tommy John surgery in April 2013) went on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to March 21. He was pitching in simulated games as of May 6. He began a rehab assignment with Triple-A Oklahoma City on May 22.

RHP Asher Wojciechowski (right lat strain) went on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to March 21. He threw first live bullpen session May 6. He began a rehab assignment with Triple-A Oklahoma City on May 21.

ROTATION:

RHP Jarred Cosart RHP Brad Peacock LHP Dallas Keuchel June 1, 2014 Page 31 of 31

RHP Collin McHugh RHP Scott Feldman LHP Brett Oberholtzer

BULLPEN:

RHP Chad Qualls (closer) RHP Jerome Williams LHP Darin Downs LHP Tony Sipp RHP Josh Fields RHP Kyle Farnsworth

CATCHERS:

Jason Castro Carlos Corporan

INFIELDERS:

1B Jesus Guzman/Marc Krauss 2B Jose Altuve SS Jonathan Villar 3B Matt Dominguez INF Marwin Gonzalez INF Chris Carter

OUTFIELDERS:

LF Robbie Grossman CF Dexter Fowler RF George Springer OF Alex Presley