



Clips

(April 30, 2015)

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FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

Angels' C.J. Wilson has fluid drained from elbow; will continue to pitch

By Mike DiGiovanna

Angels left-hander C.J. Wilson had fluid drained from his pitching elbow after Saturday's start against the Texas Rangers, but he described the procedure as being "painless, preventative and no big deal."

His start Saturday was pushed back two days because of elbow discomfort, but Wilson pitched well against the Rangers, giving up one run and seven hits in 5 2/3 innings, striking out four and walking three.

He threw his normal between-starts bullpen session at the Oakland Coliseum on Tuesday, and Wednesday he said he "felt better than I did going into my last start, so I feel like I'm on the upswing."

Wilson, who is 1-2 with a 3.12 earned-run average through four games, will start Friday night against the San Francisco Giants. He might have to undergo surgery to remove bone spurs in the elbow next winter, but he plans to pitch through any elbow issues this season.

Wilson will, however, cut back on his throwing regimen between starts. Instead of long-tossing the day after he pitches, he will not pick up a ball that day.

"Where I'm at right now, it makes more sense to throw off the mound more frequently than throwing long-toss more," Wilson said. "We'll see how it goes after the first couple of starts and go from there."

Albert Pujols' hamstring injury does not appear to be serious

By Mike DiGiovanna

Angels slugger Albert Pujols will miss at least a few games because of a tight left hamstring, an injury he suffered in the sixth inning of Wednesday night's 6-3 victory over the Oakland Athletics, but Manager Mike Scioscia is "not anticipating" that Pujols will go on the disabled list.

"There's definitely some soreness in there, but he didn't feel a pop -- it's more like a cramp," Scioscia said. "We're definitely going to err on the side of caution, so we took him out of the game. We'll see how it sets up in a day or two, but right now, we're optimistic he won't be out too long."

Pujols, the team's No. 3 hitter, blooped a single to shallow center field to lead off the sixth but clutched his hamstring four or five steps out of the batter's box. The injury is not considered serious enough to send Pujols for an MRI test.

"It's weird because I don't have that much history on the hamstring," Pujols said. "It feels more like a cramp, but it's really sore right now. We'll see how it feels tomorrow."

Pujols is batting .208 with three homers and nine runs batted in this season and has started 19 of 21 games at first base. When he returns, he will probably start at designated hitter a little more often. Scioscia will like move Mike Trout from the second to third spot in the order while Pujols is out.

"It's tough losing Albert, he's one of our big guys," said Trout, who hit a solo home run and a two-run double Wednesday night. "Hopefully, it's just a cramp."

Angels' offense, like their record, is barely average

By Mike DiGiovanna

Players and coaches insist that the Josh Hamilton saga was not a distraction for them on or off the field, but it helped obscure one important fact: The Angels have not been playing very good baseball.

Perhaps a 6-3 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Wednesday night will spark them. Johnny Giavotella snapped a 3-3 tie with a run-scoring single in the seventh inning, and Mike Trout added a two-run double for a three-run lead.

But that still left the Angels with a mediocre 10-11 record and four-game deficit behind Houston in the American League West. It's early, but 21 games is a decent sample size.

"It's not like we're playing bad baseball," catcher Chris Iannetta said, "but we're not playing to our potential."

There are issues in the rotation. Jered Weaver has lost more velocity on his fastball and is off to the worst start (0-3, 5.83 earned-run average) of his career.

C.J. Wilson had fluid drained from his left elbow after his last start but will pitch through the discomfort. He threw in the bullpen Tuesday and said he felt "way better than I did going into my last start."

And the Angels could be without No.3 hitter Albert Pujols for a few days after the first baseman left the game Wednesday in the sixth because of left-hamstring tightness, an injury he suffered running to first on a single.

Pujols is hitting .208, but the Angels can't afford to lose him. Outside of a 14-run, 15-hit outburst against Oakland on April 21, an offense that led the AL with 773 runs in 2014 has been relatively quiet, limited to three runs or fewer in 12 of 21 games.

The Angels entered Wednesday ranked 24th in the major leagues in average (.226), 26th in on-base percentage (.291) and slugging (.348) and 22nd in hitting with runners in scoring position (.229).

"There are guys who we know are better offensive performers than they've shown," Manager Mike Scioscia said. "Hopefully a comfort level will start to form and these guys will start to do the things they've historically done."

Trout (.315, five homers, 14 RBIs), Kole Calhoun (.309, three homers, 10 RBIs) and Giavotella (.317) have been productive, but Iannetta (.093), Matt Joyce (.143), Erick Aybar (.211) and Pujols have hit far below their career norms. David Freese leads the team with 15 RBIs but is batting .210.

It's like one guy has a good game and we all kind of struggle," Iannetta said. "Once guys get their swings, timing and rhythm, it should be fun."

As anemic as the offense has been, Iannetta likes the overall health of the club.

"It's kind of comforting to know we haven't played to our potential in many facets and we're still right around .500," he said. "Like I said last year, you strive to play .500 ball most of the time, you get hot and win five straight four times. Do that, and you're 20 games over .500 and in a good spot."

The players are probably more patient than Angels fans.

"I know it's different from the fans' perspective — they want to win now, and they see a loss as much bigger than we do at times, especially in April," Iannetta said. "There's nothing wrong with that. It's the fun part of being a fan."

"But you can't be on top of your game wire to wire. Few teams in the history of the game have done that. If you look at us last year, we played .500 for the most part, got hot a couple of times and won 98 games. That's how good teams do it."

Mike Trout homers in Angels' 6-3 win over Athletics

Angels 6, Oakland Athletics 3

KEY MOMENT: With the score tied, 3-3, Matt Joyce walked to open the seventh inning and took third on C.J. Cron's hit-and-run single through a vacated second-base hole. Chris Iannetta struck out, but No. 9 hitter Johnny Giavotella lined a run-scoring single to center field for a 4-3 lead. Kole Calhoun walked, and Mike Trout ripped a two-run double to left field off Evan Scribner to make it 6-3.

AT THE PLATE: Erick Aybar stroked an 1-and-2 changeup to left-center field for a two-out, two-run single in the first inning. Trout crushed a 454-foot homer to left in the third inning off Oakland starter Jesse Hahn, who did not yield a homer to any of the 153 right-handed hitters he faced with San Diego last season.

ON THE MOUND: Matt Shoemaker rebounded from a three-inning, five-run start against Oakland on April 20 to allow three runs and six hits in 5 2/3 innings. Left-hander Cesar Ramos gave up a score-tying RBI single to Josh Reddick in the sixth. Fernando Salas escaped a first-and-third, one-out jam in the seventh, Joe Smith retired the side in order in the eighth, and Huston Street struck out two of three batters in the ninth for his eighth save.

DÉTENTE REACHED? Josh Hamilton, traded to Texas after his substance-abuse relapse triggered an ugly dispute with the Angels, defused tensions with his former club by ignoring Manager Mike Scioscia's criticism that the outfielder did not apologize to Angels teammates during Monday's news conference. "I'd like to keep it that way so I don't have to respond," Hamilton told reporters in Surprise, Ariz. "I don't have to respond anyway. It doesn't matter what he said. It's of no importance. I'm not there anymore. I'm here, and I'll try to do my responding the best way on the field against them."

UP NEXT: Right-hander Garrett Richards (1-1, 3.75 ERA) will oppose Athletics right-hander Jesse Chavez (0-1, 0.71 ERA) at Oakland Coliseum on Thursday at 12:30 p.m.. On the air: TV—FS West. Radio—830.

Mike Trout, Johnny Giavotella deliver biggest hits in Angels victory

By Mike DiGiovanna

Mike Trout looked strangely overmatched Tuesday night, going hitless in four at-bats and striking out three times in a loss to the Oakland Athletics. Whatever the Angels center fielder was feeling at the plate, he did not carry it over to Wednesday night.

Trout walked and scored on Erick Aybar's two-run single in the first inning, crushed a 454-foot homer to left field in the third and capped a three-run seventh with a two-run double to left to lead the Angels to a 6-3 victory over the A's in the Oakland Coliseum.

"That's why we play 162 games," said Trout, the 23-year-old star who won the American League most valuable player award in 2014. "You can't hang your head on one game. You've got to stay positive. It's a long season. It felt good to get a couple hits and help team win tonight."

Trout has a career .250 average (34-136) with 50 strikeouts in 34 games in the Oakland Coliseum, but he's also hit 10 homers here since he was called up to the major leagues in 2012, more than any other opposing player -- and more than Oakland right fielder Josh Reddick has hit -- in that span.

"I just keep my same approach," Trout said, "whether I get hits here, at home, or anywhere."

Trout said he looked at some video and could see that he missed some good hitting pitches in recent games, but he tried not to dwell on the negatives.

"I don't try to figure out too much or think about it too much," Trout said. "Just go to sleep, the game's over, and tomorrow is a new day with five more at-bats."

Trout's double provided two big insurance runs, but it wasn't the biggest hit of the seventh. After Matt Joyce led off with a walk and took third on C.J. Cron's hit-and-run single and Chris Iannetta struck out, No. 9 hitter Johnny Giavotella capped a seven-pitch at-bat with an RBI single to center off reliever Ryan Cook for a 4-3 lead.

"He was throwing the kitchen sink up there, and I was just trying to battle and put the ball in play," Giavotella said. "He left a 2-and-2 slider over the plate, and I hit it."

Giavotella, who won the second-base job in spring training, has been a pleasant surprise in his first crack at being a big-league regular, batting .317 with nine runs and nine runs batted in. He was a part-time player in Kansas City the last four seasons.

"He's gotten some big hits for us, he's having some good at-bats, and he brings some energy," Manager Mike Scioscia said. "That whole chain of events in the seventh, from Matty Joyce getting on to C.J. executing the hit and run after the strikeout -- momentum is really shifting where they can get out of it on one pitch. And Johnny G had a great at-bat. That's obviously a key play in the game."

The seventh inning also highlighted the struggles of Iannetta, the catcher who is batting .093 and struck out twice Wednesday night.

"If you want to define pressing, you're going to just point to Chris right now," Scioscia said. "This guy wants to help so bad. He takes on the burden of the whole game plan and what he does behind the plate. He's done a good job with that.

"And at the plate, he's just really struggling to get anything to fall in. He expanded the zone a little bit tonight, which is a little bit unlike him. He'll get it going. We need him. He's just trying too hard right now."

FROM THE OC REGISTER

Josh Hamilton says he'll respond to Mike Scioscia, Angels on the field

By Jeff Fletcher

OAKLAND -- A day after Mike Scioscia said he was "disappointed" that Josh Hamilton didn't express more remorse toward his former Angels teammates, Hamilton chose not to respond to his former manager.

Speaking to the Fort Worth Star Telegram in Surprise, Ariz., where he has begun working out at Texas Rangers extending spring training, Hamilton said he didn't even want to know exactly what Scioscia had said.

"I'd like to keep it that way so I don't have to respond," Hamilton said. "I don't have to respond anyway. It doesn't matter what he said. It's of no importance. I'm not there anymore. I'm here, and I'll try to do my responding the best way on the field against them."

The rift between Hamilton and the Angels grew after his self-reported relapse of drug and alcohol use. The Angels traded him to the Rangers on Monday for \$20 million worth of salary relief.

Angels Notes: New plan for slumping Jered Weaver?

By Jeff Fletcher

OAKLAND – The Angels may try to get Jered Weaver right by pulling him earlier.

Manager Mike Scioscia has taken struggling pitchers like Aaron Sele, Ervin Santana and Scott Kazmir and sent them to the mound looking for just five innings.

The theory is that a pitcher can go harder, and focus only on his best pitches, if he's not concerned with getting through the lineup three or four times.

"We would consider that (with Weaver), but we haven't made any determination yet," Scioscia said.

Weaver is 0-3 with a 5.83 ERA after five starts, the longest winless streak to start a season in his career.

ALSO

The A's juggled their rotation for both series against the Angels this year, allowing Kazmir not to pitch against his former team. Kazmir has allowed 18 runs 7 1/3 innings against the Angels in his last three starts against them...

Matt Joyce, who began the season as the Angels cleanup hitter but dropped to seventh when he was slumping, moved up to sixth on Wednesday night. Joyce had a hit in two straight games, Sunday and Tuesday.

Mike Trout is running again for Angels

By Jeff Fletcher

OAKLAND – Mike Trout vowed in spring training to reverse one of the most puzzling trends of his career, and so far he's done it.

Trout's stolen bases decreased in each of his two full seasons, all the way to a mystifying 16 in 2014.

Trout, who stole 49 and 33 in his first two seasons, said that he wanted to push the envelope more this year. Sure enough, he had five stolen bases in his first 20 games, a pace for about 40 steals.

"I think I'm taking more chances this year," Trout said. "I'm getting on first and reading pitchers better. I have experience on the bases, seeing pitchers more than once and knowing their tendencies."

Trout said that bench coach Dino Ebel has been instrumental in helping him improve at the mental game of stealing bases. Since pitchers have been paying increasing attention to slowing him down, Trout has needed to get better at picking the times to steal.

"Dino is real good at picking up things from the pitcher," Trout said.

Pitchers have used more slide steps against Trout over the past couple years, Ebel said. The defense for that is reading better when they are going to use the slide step and when they aren't.

"He's watching film and watching pitcher's techniques," Ebel said. "Certain pitchers get into certain patterns. I watch closely during the game and try to feed him little things that can help him."

Ebel said Trout has learned to get more aggressive leads, too.

"If you can get another half step, take it," Ebel said. "Little things like that."

There's also just an attitude change.

"He wants to be more aggressive," Ebel said. "He wants to steal bases. Mike (Scioscia) has said, 'Go ahead and steal bags.' There are certain parts in the ballgame where you've got to let Albert (Pujols) swing the bat, and he understands that. But mentally this year he said 'I'm going to be more aggressive and steal when I can,' and he's starting to do that again. He's feeling comfortable doing it."

Angels' Albert Pujols leaves game with hamstring tightness

By Jeff Fletcher

OAKLAND -- Albert Pujols left Wednesday night's game in the sixth inning after grabbing his left hamstring while jogging to first base on a bloop single.

The injury was described as left hamstring tightness.

The Angels, who went into the night hitting .226, can not afford to lose Pujols for any extended period.

Pujols is hitting .208, but he has five hits in his last 15 at-bats, and he had hit a few other balls hard.

Angels top Athletics, but lose Albert Pujols to hamstring injury

By Jeff Fletcher

OAKLAND – Concern hung over Albert Pujols in what should have been a happy Angels clubhouse Wednesday night.

Pujols had left the 6-3 victory over the Oakland A's with tightness in his left hamstring.

Manager Mike Scioscia said Pujols won't play Thursday, but the Angels don't expect Pujols to go on the disabled list.

Pujols didn't feel anything pop, but he didn't feel good either.

"It feels more like a cramp, but it's really sore right now," he said. "We'll see tomorrow."

Pujols said he has little history with hamstring injuries, so he couldn't diagnose this one barely 90 minutes after it grabbed him while he was jogging to first with a sixth-inning single.

The initial tests showed nothing major, Pujols said.

For now, the Angels will simply have to wait to see if one of their most important players is going to miss much time.

"It's tough losing Albert," Mike Trout said. "He's one of our big guys. Hopefully it's just a cramp."

Trout, the Angels' biggest of the big guys, did much of the damage Wednesday night for an offense that has been scuffling.

Trout came back and hit his fifth homer and a two-run double as part of the tie-breaking three-run seventh inning.

It was the first multihit game since April 17 for Trout, who had been 5 for 34 since then. On Tuesday night, he was hitless in four at-bats, with three strikeouts.

"You can't put your head down and hang your head on one game," Trout said. "You have to stay positive. It's a long season. It felt good to get us a couple hits and help the team win tonight."

Scioscia said: "Mike makes adjustments from one at-bat to the other. He'll have a rough at-bat, where a guy makes some pitches, and he'll come back and have a great at-bat later in the game or whatever it might be. For him to bounce back, that's not surprising. He's just a special player."

Trout and Johnny Giavotella, one of the few players who has hit consistently well throughout the season's first 21 games, had the biggest hits in the inning. Giavotella lined a two-out single up the middle, driving in the tie-breaking run.

The inning was set up by a Matt Joyce walk and a C.J. Cron single on a hit-and-run.

The six-run outburst was a welcome sight for the Angels, who are hitting .226. It did not come in time, however, to get a victory for Matt Shoemaker.

Shoemaker, who was on the bereavement list following the death of his grandfather, took the mound for his first outing in nine days.

Last time out he gave up five runs in three innings against the A's. This time he had only allowed one run through five, but the A's got to him in the sixth.

Marcus Semien hit a grounder to Erick Aybar, who misplayed it for an infield hit. Shoemaker got the next two outs, but then he gave up an Ike Davis double into the right field corner.

Cesar Ramos then entered to face left-hander Josh Reddick, and he gave up a tying single.

"It felt good to get back out there," Shoemaker said. "I was a little rusty, but overall, pretty good. I executed game plan. Unfortunately, sixth inning got away from me a little bit. Being away for those few days, watching the games on TV felt wrong. Nice to be back. We got the win today, that's the important part."

On deck: Angels at A's, Thursday, 12:30 p.m.

By Jeff Fletcher

Where: O.co Coliseum

TV: Fox Sports West, 12:30 p.m.

Did you know: Heading into Wednesday night's game, the A's and Angels had split their past 254 games right down the middle, 127-127.

THE PITCHERS

RHP GARRETT RICHARDS (1-1, 3.75)

Richards proclaimed himself 100 percent back to normal after his last outing, his second since coming back from left knee surgery. Richards gave up two runs on three hits in seven innings, throwing 98 pitches. In his first outing, he needed 100 pitches and lasted only five innings, allowing three runs.

Vs. A's: 1-3, 5.62

At O.co Coliseum: 0-2, 5.95

Loves to face: Billy Butler, 0 for 8 (.000)

Hates to face: Josh Reddick, 5 for 12 (.417)

RHP JESSE CHAVEZ (0-1, 0.71)

Chavez, who opened the season as the A's No. 6 starter, earned a spot in the rotation with an impressive spot start against the Angels last week. Starting because Jesse Hahn had a blister, Chavez gave up just one hit in six innings. Unfortunately for him, the one hit was a two-run homer by Kole Calhoun. Chavez, a product of A.B. Miller High in Fontana and Riverside Community College, is now in the rotation in place of Kendall Graveman, who was sent to Triple A.

Vs. Angels: 1-4, 3.57

At O.co Coliseum: 9-5, 3.39

Loves to face: David Freese, 1 for 11 (.091)

Hates to face: Albert Pujols, 7 for 16 (.438)

FROM ANGELS.COM

Dipoto preaches patience with Angels' struggling offense

By Alden Gonzalez

OAKLAND -- Angels general manager Jerry Dipoto isn't ready to push the proverbial panic button on his ailing offense, which entered Wednesday ranked 22nd in the Majors in runs and 25th in OPS.

"These guys are professionals. They've got track records. They're all in their prime years. None of them is coming off some absurd decline that suggests this is the next step towards something worse," Dipoto said in a phone conversation. "Honestly, I think it's just that a bunch of guys went cold at the same time. We've played 20 games."

Teams typically wait until June or July to make trades, and the Angels are expected to do the same. Eventually, they'll probably seek an upgrade in left field, which would allow the left-handed-hitting Matt Joyce and the right-handed-hitting C.J. Cron to platoon at designated hitter -- the plan before Josh Hamilton had a drug relapse and was ultimately traded to the Rangers.

And they'll have the financial flexibility to be aggressive.

The Angels opened the season roughly \$12 million below the luxury-tax threshold, which has basically acted as their spending limit the last few years. Now, after saving about \$20 million on Hamilton's contract over the next three years, they're more than \$15 million below.

"This is just not a time of year when you can add offense," Dipoto said. "It's not readily available to you."

The Angels scored three runs or fewer in 12 of their first 20 games and five of their regulars -- Chris Iannetta, Albert Pujols, Erick Aybar, David Freese and Joyce -- entered Wednesday with batting averages of .218 or below. But Dipoto preached patience, pointing out how well almost all of the everyday players performed throughout Spring Training.

"I'm certainly not ready to hit the panic button," Dipoto said of an offense that led the Majors in runs last season. "This is a good team. It's a good offense, and I believe they will turn it around. League-wise, it's been generally hard to score runs."

- Hamilton told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram he wasn't aware of the comments made by Angels manager Mike Scioscia on Tuesday, saying: "I'd like to keep it that way so I don't have to respond. I don't have to respond anyway. It doesn't matter what he said. It's of no importance. I'm not there anymore. I'm here, and I'll try to do my responding the best way on the field against them."

- Scioscia has previously helped some of his struggling starters, like Ervin Santana and Scott Kazmir, by throwing them only five innings. The idea is that they can go harder and shorten their repertoire if they only have to worry about getting 18 outs. Asked whether he would consider doing that with Jered Weaver, who's 0-3 with a 5.83 ERA, Scioscia said: "We would consider that, but we haven't made any determinations yet."

Wilson has fluid drained from elbow

By Alden Gonzalez

OAKLAND -- Angels left-hander C.J. Wilson has had all sorts of surgical procedures on his left elbow, from Tommy John surgery in 2003 to the removal of bone spurs in August 2008 and October 2012. His most recent start led to a first: the removal of fluids.

Wilson took the mound against the Rangers on Saturday, two days after originally scheduled because of elbow soreness, then he had fluid drained from his left elbow shortly after. He threw his normal between-starts bullpen session from the Coliseum on Wednesday and said the elbow felt "way better than it was a week ago."

Wilson, who will start Friday against the Giants, has been told he can continue to pitch every five days.

Asked about his level of concern, Wilson said: "None. There's a formula. I know what to do. We know what the process needs to be. If we just stick to that process, we'll be fine."

Wilson -- 1-2 with a 3.12 ERA in his first four starts -- gave up a run on seven hits and three walks in 5 2/3 innings Saturday, striking out four. To compensate for his sore elbow, the 34-year-old left-hander threw 43 percent sinkers. After getting fluid drained, Wilson felt better "immediately."

"Way better," he said.

"I don't have any concern," Angels pitching coach Mike Butcher added. "As long as he's telling me that he's good to go, I'm good to go."

Fluid buildup in the elbow is typically caused by bursitis, or inflammation in the bursa, a fluid-filled sac that acts as a cushion between bone and tendon. The fluid restricts movement, and draining it is a method that commonly relieves symptoms. Sometimes, however, it has to be done multiple times.

Wilson doesn't expect being able to "reach back and throw 94 mph," which is typically max effort.

"But we'll see what happens Friday, in terms of what stuff shows up," Wilson said. "I felt good today. I felt way better today than I did going into my last start, and I pitched well last start."

Wilson saw the inflammation as a positive, that his body had a natural defense mechanism to fight the trauma of pitching through a balky elbow. But he conceded that the removal of bone spurs this offseason -- for the third time in his career -- is inevitable.

"Yeah, I would say that," Wilson said. "It's inevitable."

"That's not a big deal, though. It's super straightforward. The rehab is very short, and then it works better and you go from there."

Trout eyes fourth consecutive trip to All-Star Game

By Alden Gonzalez

OAKLAND -- The Angels' offense has been slow out of the gate, but those April woes haven't necessarily applied to Mike Trout.

The Angels' superstar center fielder looks poised for his fourth All-Star Game appearance in his fourth full season.

Trout began the year with a 10-game hitting streak and started a six-game road trip on Tuesday with a .318/.432/.545 slash line, adding four homers and 11 RBIs. He entered the season with hopes of improving his strikeout and stolen-base totals, and so far, he has. Trout has already stolen five bases, a number he didn't reach until May 14 last year. And he's struck out 16 times in the Angels' first 19 games. Through 19 games last year, he had 23.

In less than three months, Trout could start his third straight All-Star Game -- at age 23.

Also representing the Angels on the Midsummer Classic ballot are Albert Pujols, Johnny Giavotella, Erick Aybar, David Freese, Chris Iannetta, C.J. Cron, Kole Calhoun and Matt Joyce.

Fans can cast their votes for starters at MLB.com and all 30 club sites -- on their computers, tablets and smartphones -- using the 2015 Esurance MLB All-Star Game Ballot until Thursday, July 2, at 8:59 p.m. PT. For the first time, voting is exclusively online, where fans may submit up to 35 ballots.

Fans may also receive the ballot by texting "vote" to 89269 (USA) or 101010 (Canada), or by texting "vota" for a ballot in Spanish. Message and data rates may apply. Up to five messages can be sent, with no purchase required. Reply "stop" to cancel and "help" for info.

Following the announcement of the 2015 All-Stars, fans can return to MLB.com to cast their 2015 Esurance MLB All-Star Game Final Vote for the final player for each league's All-Star roster. During the All-Star Game on Tuesday, July 14, fans can visit MLB.com to submit their choice for the Ted Williams Most Valuable Player Award, presented by Chevrolet, via the 2015 MLB All-Star Game MVP Vote.

MLB.com will provide extensive online coverage of All-Star Week festivities.

The 86th All-Star Game will be televised nationally by FOX, in Canada by Rogers Sportsnet and RDS, and worldwide by partners in more than 200 countries via MLB International's independent feed. ESPN Radio and ESPN Radio Deportes will provide national radio coverage of the All-Star Game. MLB Network and SiriusXM will also provide comprehensive All-Star Week coverage. For more information, please visit allstargame.com.

Trout belts a monster home run at Coliseum

By Alden Gonzalez

OAKLAND -- Mike Trout got a 90-mph fastball right down the middle in Wednesday's third inning and did what you'd expect: He crushed it way over the fence.

Trout's home run, a solo shot off A's starter Jesse Hahn, sailed several rows beyond the Coliseum's left-center-field scoreboard, which sits nearly 370 feet from home plate. The ball traveled a whopping 454 feet, per Statcast tracking technology.

That distance ties Trout with Marlins slugger Giancarlo Stanton for the seventh-longest home run in the Majors this season. The long ball was Trout's fifth, giving the Angels a 3-1 lead and putting him on pace for a career-high 39 home runs this season.

Hamstring injury could keep Pujols out through weekend

By Alden Gonzalez

OAKLAND -- Albert Pujols' left hamstring tightened up as he ran out a sixth-inning single on Wednesday night, prompting the first baseman to exit early in the Angels' eventual 6-3 win over the A's.

Angels manager Mike Scioscia doesn't anticipate the injury to send Pujols to the disabled list, but he said, "There's some soreness in there, definitely."

Pujols isn't expected to start Thursday's day game, and there's a decent chance he won't play the rest of this week, with the following three games coming in a National League venue -- AT&T Park in San Francisco -- that eliminates the designated hitter.

"It feels more like a cramp, but it's really sore right now," Pujols said. "We'll see tomorrow."

Pujols screamed in pain while jogging halfway down the first-base line after a bloop single off Dan Otero and was immediately checked on by the Angels' training staff. The 35-year-old felt a little better after loosening his left leg, but Grant Green took over as a pinch-runner nonetheless.

Initial tests checked out fine and Pujols probably won't require an MRI exam, but he will need to sit out a little while.

"It's weird," said Pujols, batting .208 through the Angels' first 21 games. "I don't have that much history on the hamstring."

For the Angels, it's coming at a tough time.

Their offense has been slow out of the gate, Wednesday night's three-run seventh inning notwithstanding. They scored three runs or fewer in 12 of their first 20 games and entered Wednesday ranked 22nd in the Majors in runs and 25th in OPS.

With Pujols out, Mike Trout is expected to slide into the No. 3 spot and Erick Aybar could bat second, behind leadoff man Kole Calhoun. C.J. Cron will play first base, though Green is also an option.

"It's tough losing Albert, one of our big guys," Trout said. "Hopefully it's just a cramp."

Trout's bat comes to life as Angels take down A's

By Alden Gonzalez and Alex Espinosa

OAKLAND -- Faint "MVP!" chants could be heard at the Coliseum on Wednesday night, moments after Mike Trout extended the Angels' lead with another well-struck line drive. One night after an 0-for-4, three-strikeout performance, the superstar center fielder came back with a vengeance, blasting a 454-foot home run in the third and a two-run double in the seventh to lead the Angels to a 6-3 win over the A's.

Matt Shoemaker, pitching on eight days' rest after being placed on the bereavement list, departed the game with two outs and a one-run lead in the sixth, but A's right fielder Josh Reddick lined an RBI single off Cesar Ramos to tie the game at 3. The next half-inning, though, Johnny Giavotella hit an RBI single up the middle off Ryan Cook and Trout added a bases-loaded double off Evan Scribner two batters later to give the Angels a 6-3 lead.

Fernando Salas, Joe Smith and Huston Street kept the A's (9-13) off the scoreboard in the final three innings, splitting the first two of this three-game series and putting the Angels at 10-11 on the season.

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Johnny G. Good: Giavotella continued his solid start to the season with another timely hit. The latest came in the seventh, with runners on the corners and one out in a tied game. Giavotella fouled off a couple of two-strike pitches from Cook, then lined a slider up the middle to give the Angels their second lead of the game, 4-3. Giavotella's nine RBIs this season are second in the Majors among No. 9 hitters.

"I take pride in my two-strike approach, battling, competing," Giavotella said. "I'm glad I was able to come through with a big knock right there and that we got a win tonight."

Not so mighty 'pen: Oakland's bullpen woes continued, as the Angels scored three runs on a trio of relievers in the seventh inning. All three runs were charged to Cook, who walked Matt Joyce to lead off the frame. Cook was pulled after giving up Giavotella's tiebreaking single, Fernando Abad walked the bases loaded and Trout laced his two-run double against Scribner. The A's have a 4.50 bullpen ERA this season.

"We've struggled late in games here recently and we have to go about putting that behind us," said A's manager Bob Melvin.

Shoemaker solid in return: Shoemaker was knocked around by the A's his last time out, giving up five runs on seven hits and three walks in just three innings on April 20. On Wednesday, the 28-year-old right-hander pitched around only six hits and a walk in 5 2/3 innings, leaving with the lead and ultimately getting charged with three runs. His ERA dropped to 6.00.

"Being away for those few days, watching the games on TV, it felt wrong," Shoemaker said. "It was nice to be back. We got the win today. That's the important part."

QUOTABLE

"If you want to define pressing, you're going to just point to Chris right now. This guy wants to help so bad. He takes on the burden of the whole game plan and what he does behind the plate. He's done a good job with that. And at the plate, he's just really struggling to get anything to fall in." -- Angels manager Mike Scioscia on Chris Iannetta, whose batting average fell to .093 after an 0-for-4 night

SOUND SMART WITH YOUR FRIENDS

Trout's homer, on a 90-mph fastball from Jesse Hahn, traveled 454 feet, per Statcast tracking technology. That distance ties Trout with Giancarlo Stanton for the seventh-longest home run this season.

s a solo homer to the seats in left-center field in the 3rd inning to tally his fifth home run of the season
INJURY REPORT

Albert Pujols' left hamstring grabbed on him after a sixth-inning single, forcing the Angels' first baseman to come out of the game. Pujols seemingly felt better after loosening his leg once he got to first base, but was replaced by Grant Green nonetheless.

WHAT'S NEXT

Angels: Garrett Richards makes his third start of the season in Thursday's 12:37 p.m. PT series finale from the Coliseum. Last time out, Richards earned his first win since rupturing his left patellar tendon eight months earlier, giving up just two runs on three hits and three walks in seven innings against the Rangers.

A's: Oakland will turn to Jesse Chavez as it tries to win its first day game of the season. Chavez will make his second start, and first since taking over Kendall Graveman's spot in the rotation. The right-hander was charged with a hard-luck loss against the Angels on April 23, when he gave up two runs (one earned) on a hit and three walks over six innings.

Trout bounces back, as usual

By Alden Gonzalez

OAKLAND -- Mike Trout isn't one to let slumps linger. He turns the page quickly, adjusts frequently and hardly ever lets a bad night roll into the next one. Since his first full season in 2012, the Angels' superstar center fielder has gone hitless in four or more at-bats 69 times. In the following games, he's a combined .333 hitter with 15 homers, 48 RBIs and 27 walks.

So Wednesday night's performance was typical.

Twenty-four hours after an 0-for-4, three-strikeout game, Trout dominated the second of a three-game series from the Coliseum, crushing a solo homer off A's starter Jesse Hahn in the third and lacing a two-run double deep into the left-field corner off A's reliever Evan Scribner in the seventh.

"You can't hang your head on one game," Trout said after leading the Angels to a 6-3 win. "You have to stay positive. It's a long season. It felt good to get us a couple hits and help the team win tonight."

The Angels' offense has been sluggish early on, heading into Wednesday with the 22nd-ranked OPS in the Majors. But those struggles exclude Trout. His slash line is .315/.427/.575. He's stolen five bases in his first 21 games, a number he didn't reach until his 39th game last year. And he has a team-leading five home runs, putting him on pace for a career-high 39.

Trout's approach after Tuesday's game, just his fifth hitless one all season?

"Just turn the page," he said. "Try not to think about it too much. You don't want to think about it once you go to sleep. It's over, and you have a new day and have five more at-bats."

In his first one Wednesday, he worked a walk on a two-strike count. His second time up, he got a 90-mph fastball right down the middle and blasted it well over the scoreboard in left-center field, a shot that traveled 454 feet to tie Trout with Giancarlo Stanton for the seventh-longest home run this season. After a caught-looking strikeout in his third at-bat, Trout came up with the bases loaded and one out, got a changeup over the heart of the plate and lined it to the left-field wall to extend the Angels' lead from one to three.

Trout watched some video pregame and felt he was missing some pitches he could hit the previous night.

"I felt good tonight," said Trout, who has gone hitless in four or more at-bats in back-to-back games just seven times in his career.

"Mike makes adjustments from one at-bat to the other," Angels manager Mike Scioscia added. "He'll have a rough at-bat, where a guy makes some pitches, and he'll come back and have a great at-bat later in the game or whatever it might be. For him to bounce back, that's not surprising. He's just a special player."

A's send Chavez after series win vs. Angels

By Alex Espinoza

Jesse Chavez might not have earned a starter's role for the A's out of Spring Training, but he's already worked his way back into Oakland's rotation. Now he's set to take on the Angels and right-hander Garrett Richards on Thursday in the series' rubber match.

Chavez posted a 3.45 ERA in 32 appearances (21 starts) for the A's in 2014 but was relegated to a long-relief role to begin the season. After struggling young righty Kendall Graveman was optioned to Triple-A on Sunday, Chavez got the call.

Meanwhile, Richards will pitch for the first time since Adrian Beltre sent him a \$300 invoice for breaking three of his bats last week.

Things to know:

- This will mark the second start for Chavez, as he filled in for Jesse Hahn (blister) against the Angels on April 23. In that outing, Chavez held the Angels to two runs (one earned) on a hit and three walks while striking out four in six innings, but he was charged with the loss in a 2-0 A's defeat.
- Richards has made two starts since missing the first two weeks of the season recovering from October knee surgery. The 26-year-old righty looked sharp against Texas, allowing two earned runs on three hits and three walks while striking out five in seven innings.
- Oakland will try to break its day-game hex. To begin the year, the A's are 0-7 while playing under the sun and remain the league's only team without a day-game victory. The A's also haven't hit a day-game homer, averaging just 3.29 runs while the pitching staff has a 4.64 ERA.

FROM THE LA DAILY NEWS

Angels could put struggling pitcher Jered Weaver on short leash

By Gideon Rubin

OAKLAND >> A plan that's worked for Angels pitchers in the past may be a blueprint for Jered Weaver's future.

That's according to Angels manager Mike Scioscia, who on Wednesday said the 32-year-old former Simi Valley High/Long Beach State star might work on a short leash going forward, with his starts limited to five innings.

Scioscia said the plan encourages pitchers to use their best pitch in key situations early in the game without hesitation, knowing they won't go through the middle of the order a third or fourth time.

"If you're only going 15 outs, the theory is that you might only face the middle of the order twice, so you can really go harder with pitches to get guys out instead of maybe having to challenge a guy with a pitch because you have two out and nobody on and you know you've got that nasty slider, but you're saving it in case you face them again in the fifth with a guy on third and two outs," Scioscia said. "That kind of mentality that goes into a game plan just moves everything to the forefront, condenses everything and sometimes it has a positive effect."

Scioscia has had mixed results instituting the plan with struggling veteran starters Ervin Santana, Aaron Sele and Scott Kazmir, among others.

Weaver, who's off to the worst start of his career, would appear to be an ideal candidate. He fell to 0-3 and saw his ERA balloon to 5.83 in Tuesday's 6-2 loss to the A's.

And although he insists no decisions have yet been made about putting Weaver on a shorter leash, Scioscia acknowledged that the plan is on the table.

"I think we will consider that, but we haven't made a determination," Scioscia said.

Weaver's struggles this year have coincided with a precipitous drop in his velocity — his fastball now tops out at 86 mph.

Scioscia noted that Weaver has made steady progress since rough outings in his first two starts, in which he allowed 10 earned runs over 10 1/3 innings.

Weaver has had quality starts (six innings with three or fewer earned runs allowed) in two of his last three starts. In Monday's game, Weaver retired 16 of the last 18 batters he faced after giving up five runs in the first inning.

"I don't know if that's what we're dealing (with Weaver) but we'd consider anything to get him over the hump," Scioscia said.

BULLPEN UPDATE

The Angels will go with a seven-man bullpen after optioning reliever Cam Bedrosian to Triple-A Salt Lake on Tuesday night. The move was made to make room for Matt Shoemaker, who came off the bereavement list for Wednesday's start against Oakland.

Scioscia noted that his bullpen is well-rested and until further notice should be able to absorb innings. The team had an off-day on Monday, and Bedrosian was the only reliever who pitched Tuesday.

"We can adjust in a day's notice if we have to, but right now we're good with it," Scioscia said.

Johnny Giavotella's clutch hitting delivers Angels 6-3 win over A's

By Gideon Rubin

OAKLAND >> The comparisons to David Eckstein came almost instantly after the Angels acquired Johnny Giavotella from the Kansas Royals during the offseason.

The undersized, overachieving infielder has delivered.

And for an Angels offense that's gone from baseball's most dangerous last season to altogether pedestrian this season, the 5-foot-8 185-pounder's emergence couldn't have come at a better time.

On Wednesday, the team's new Little Engine That Could came through with another clutch hit in a 6-3 victory over the Oakland A's in front of 16,212 at O.co Coliseum.

"Johnny's really, for his first crack of getting up to the big leagues, done very well for us," manager Mike Scioscia said. "He's gotten some big hits for us. He always has good at-bats, he brings some energy."

The good vibes of a win over a divisional rival, however, were dampened by concern over a hamstring injury slugging first baseman Albert Pujols suffered running out a single to center leading off the sixth.

The injury doesn't appear to be serious. Pujols described the injury as a cramping feeling and said he didn't hear it pop. Scioscia said Pujols won't be in the lineup for today's game but hopes to have him back within a few days. He doesn't anticipate Pujols going on the disabled list and no MRI is planned.

It's "sore," Pujols said. "How do you think it's gonna feel?"

Giavotella, a .238 hitter over parts of four seasons in Kansas City, was brought in to replace Howie Kendrick, the popular second baseman who's now with the Dodgers.

Giavotella was 2 for 4 to boost his average to .317 (19 for 60).

His run-scoring single off A's reliever Ryan Cook (0-1) with one out in the top of the seventh snapped a 3-3 tie and sparked a decisive three-run rally.

Later in the inning, Mike Trout doubled in two runs to make it 6-3.

Trout was 2 for 3 with a homer and three RBI. He's feasted in Oakland, hitting 10 homers since his 2011 call-up — more than any visiting player over that span and more than A's slugger Josh Reddick.

Giavotella singled sharply to center off Cook on a 2-2 pitch, culminating a Ecksteinesque seven-pitch at-bat in which he battled back from an 0-2 count.

"I take pride in my two-strike approach, going up there battling with two strikes and competing and trying to have good at-bats for the team and I was able to come through with the big knock there," Giavotella said.

Matt Joyce drew a leadoff walk to start the seventh and he took third when C.J. Cron followed with single to right. Cook then struck out Chris Iannetta.

The rally followed a bottom of the sixth inning in which the A's rallied from a 3-1 deficit on consecutive two-out RBI hits from Ike Davis and Reddick.

"That whole chain of events from Matty Joyce getting on to C.J. executing a great hit-and-run after the strikeout, momentum is kind of shifting where they can really get out of it with one pitch," Scioscia said. "Johnny G. had a great at bat, he hit that bullet up the middle for that base hit to give us the lead. That's obviously a key play in the game."

The Angels led 3-1 going into the bottom of the sixth when the A's tied the score on consecutive two-out hits.

The win was especially important because the Halos' sputtering offense finally showed signs of life after scoring three runs or fewer in seven of the previous 10 games. The Angels, who last season led the majors in runs scored (773), ranked 10th in the American League in that department (77) and had the league's second-worst team batting average (.226) going into Wednesday.

Angels starter Matt Shoemaker struck out three batters and allowed three runs on six hits and one walk in 5 2/3 innings.

Fernando Salas (1-1) pitched out of a first-and-third one-out situation in the bottom of the seventh.

FROM CBS SPORTS

Hamilton owes Angels an apology after relapse, subsequent trade

By Jon Heyman

Former and likely future superstar Josh Hamilton is happily training in Surprise, Ariz., preparing for what will probably turn out to be the latest rebirth in a career full of them.

Most folks outside of Los Angeles and Orange counties are rooting for Hamilton, and his is undoubtedly a compelling story of rebirth and retribution.

Hamilton possesses that irresistible exacta of ability and personality that's hard to beat. Maybe too irresistible.

Upon his arrival to Globe Life Park for the news conference to announce the latest positive turn -- his trade back to his beloved Rangers from his not-beloved Angels -- Hamilton wore a smile that "almost blinded" folks, the Rangers' Emily Jones (@EmilyJonesMcCoy) tweeted to announce his appearance. And you imagine he is still smiling as broadly in Surprise, where the Comeback King is working on coming back.

The Rangers understand the gamble, which explains the puny price they paid. But they do expect him to at least aid an underperforming offense, if not become the superstar he was for them from 2009-13.

Trading Hamilton back to his adopted home in Texas was the best of all possible outcomes for all concerned, including the Angels. No one can reasonably question that.

The Rangers got back the best player of their championship years for the price of a good utility player (\$6 million over three years). And the Angels shaved almost a year off Hamilton's failed \$125 million, five-year free-agent deal (\$20 million), which is hard to believe, and presumably a lot more than they would have saved via the disallowed suspension.

As for Hamilton, he moves on, returning to the place he loves. That part is great. That he goes without so much as a dent, or a speck of criticism that wasn't shouted down, well, that doesn't seem quite right.

Hamilton is an extremely affable, talented guy, and it's hard not to root for him. It is also difficult to criticize him, as not too many have lived in those shoes. But if no one else will say anything, at some point you'd like to see Hamilton say something. "I'm sorry," would be a start.

Hamilton's one loss in this case was a small sum of money mitigated by a tax savings, a new opt out clause and that big smile. To facilitate the trade back to Arlington, Texas, Hamilton did give back \$14 million, according to sources, who confirmed the report by Jeff Fletcher of the Orange County Register.

But Hamilton saves about \$5 million in taxes (based on a 13.3 percent California state tax on folks making more than \$1 million vs. zero in Texas, and a calculation of games actually played in California), and he gets a new opt-out clause after 2016. It's no stretch to think that clause could result in yet another big payday, assuming he rekindles past greatness.

The opt-out is a nice perk to counter his \$14 million giveback, and no one should be shocked if he turns it into millions. After all, this is a player who was down and out of baseball from 2002-06 following multiple drug

failures, and didn't lose a thing in terms of his play. Not a step, nor a speck of power. As soon as he put the spikes back on, he was a superstar again.

Of course, even two more years from now it might be tough for him to feign going elsewhere after this deal, in which he told the Angels he only would accept a trade to the Rangers -- his right as a player with a full no-trade. The Angels worked several trade possibilities for Hamilton, but by the final few weeks he made it clear he would only go to Texas. Other teams were involved as part of potential three-team scenarios, and there were only a couple of those possibilities, as most teams were said to have no interest.

Somehow, the Angels, Rangers, Hamilton's agent Michael Moyer and the union made it work. It works to the point where everyone's happy, even if Hamilton's the one smiling brightest.

Which is all great. Yet, the fallout doesn't seem quite fair.

No one's going to hold a pity party for Angels owner Arte Moreno, an aggrieved billionaire. It's not in vogue to stick up for a very rich guy, and no one cares that he's out \$63 million, and countless wasted man hours.

As Hamilton himself said at his press conference, Moreno knew what he was getting into. And he certainly could have come up with much more delicate phrases following the surprise arbitrator ruling that commissioner Rob Manfred couldn't suspend Hamilton for his self-reported relapse.

At that moment, the very rich guy looked a little too interested in saving a few bucks.

But I can't really blame him. Not too much, anyway.

Let's not forget, Hamilton is the one who caused this whole soap opera. Self-reported or not, Hamilton is the one who relapsed on alcohol and cocaine. Hamilton is the one who let his Angels teammates down.

Hamilton cuts a sympathetic figure. His is a great story. And by complaining about the ruling, Moreno made him even more sympathetic. By the time Moreno was done talking, it was like they were "ready to erect a statute" for Hamilton at Angels Stadium, as one person observed.

Hamilton's down-home demeanor has an uncanny way to win folks over. He won over Moreno two and a half years ago when he sat in his living room outside Dallas, he showed Moreno the scrapbook and he sold Moreno on a move out west that was ill-advised for all concerned.

And he sold the arbitrator that a relapse isn't really a relapse. Or at least, it isn't a violation.

It's to the point where Hamilton is so convincing he doesn't even have to try. And he hasn't been trying.

In his Texas press conference, Hamilton never once took responsibility for causing the Angels a lot of heartache. Instead, what he said was Moreno should have known better. That strikes me as a very different message than the one he gave him when selling him on the \$125 million deal, which is among the all-time worst from a team perspective.

Hamilton shouldn't take big hits for his limp performance (31 home runs in two seasons in California). But it was more than a bit weird that the onetime 240-pound star showed up at his first Angels camp weighing 212 pounds. Maybe he was simply saddened to leave Texas, as others around the Angels say he seemed glum a lot of the time. Maybe he was homesick.

Whatever, he wasn't the same player, almost from the moment he got to Orange County and donned Angels red. There once was an big Angels free agent, Lyman Bostock, so upset not to be living up to a big free-agent deal that he apologized and offered to give back part of the money.

Of course, people are different, times have changed and apologies are neither required nor expected for underperformance. But Hamilton created this year's mess with his actions. When he relapsed, he might have shown more remorse. Or at least some.

Angels people suggested two things to Hamilton after the star admitted to the relapse. One was that he consider checking into rehab. The other was that he call Moreno to apologize.

Either might have saved the relationship. Of course, it's also quite possible Hamilton might have had no interest in saving the relationship. But even if he doesn't feel he needs rehab (I'm not addiction expert, but it doesn't seem an unreasonable request), there's no good reason not to call Moreno to apologize at some point.

Hamilton said something to someone about how he wasn't able to get through. But even if we believe he doesn't have Moreno's number (a stretch), he could have said something publicly to suggest some sort of contrition. Instead, in the press conference where he wore the bright smile Hamilton suggested he worked hard but the Angels didn't do enough. He also suggested Moreno should have known better.

"[Moreno] knew what the deal was when he signed me," Hamilton said. "Hands down, he knew what he was getting. He knew what the risks were. He knew all those things. Under the [joint drug agreement], it is what it is."

Moreno questioned Hamilton's "accountability" after the arbitrator ruling. So perhaps Hamilton wasn't in a charitable mood. But maybe Hamilton's lack of accountability is fair game at this point.

Maybe he's too used to receiving accolades and love, and not the tough kind. Hamilton admitted to MLB he messed up when he self-reported his relapse. But it's fair to question whether he truly takes responsibility. Or is he just happy to have everything work out for him, again.

Hamilton can't be blamed for wanting to go back to Texas, where they got on-field success by always wrapping their arms around him. Perhaps, with his divorce pending, he needed to be in Texas to stay close to his four daughters.

Maybe he needed this divorce from the Angels. But it certainly wasn't mostly the team's fault. The Angels hired a sober coach/accountability partner at Hamilton's choosing, and they had Shayne Kelley in place, until Hamilton wanted to make a change.

The Angels players supported him throughout. Even after the relapse, they said positive things. Like everyone else, they like him personally. And they wish him the best.

It's true Moreno struck too harsh a note at times. But other than a few understandable slips, the Angels aren't to blame here. They didn't cause the mess. And they certainly deserved an apology.

Before Texas trade, Dodgers were involved in Hamilton trade scenarios

By Jon Heyman

The Dodgers were in the middle of the Josh Hamilton trade talks before the cross-town Angels traded him to his preferred Rangers, according to sources familiar with the discussions.

The Dodgers are believed to have discussed both straight deals and three-way scenarios that would have sent Hamilton to Texas but it's apparent that ultimately they couldn't quite pull off any sort of deal that satisfied the Angels. The cash-rich Dodgers' main intention apparently was to pay some money while gathering prospects, not add Hamilton to their talented and crowded outfield mix; so even if a straight deal worked, presumably Hamilton would have gone to the Rangers eventually, anyway.

It seems that the Dodgers were mainly trying to interject themselves into the ongoing trade talks and appear to have had no real intention of ultimately keeping Hamilton. The Dodgers have had an outfield glut for more than a year now (though that's less the case with Matt Kemp gone), and in any case there's no reason to realistically think Hamilton would be any happier 45 miles north of Anaheim, where the Angels play.

Hamilton, who has a full no-trade, at some point made it clear that his priority was to get back to Texas, where he thrived from 2009-13, and where his kids live. There's no belief a deal to go to the Dodgers was ever brought to Hamilton, and also no reason to think he would have accepted one there, anyway.

There was a report of interest from a National League team by Ken Rosenthal of FOXSports.com, and the Dodgers may have been the team from that report, though it isn't known if there was another team or two involved in talks. Other interest was said to have been very limited, even in three-way deals, as teams seemed reticent to get involved in the messy situation.

Eventually, the straight deal with the Rangers worked nicely. Angels owner Arte Moreno was said to have told folks he wanted to save at least \$20 million of the \$83 million remaining, and the Angels did just that with the deal they made with Texas.

According to sources, the Rangers agreed to chip in \$6 million over three years, while Hamilton, with about a \$5-million tax savings and the addition of an opt-out clause after the 2016 season, took the unusual step of agreeing to contribute \$14 million to facilitate the trade back to Texas.

FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Angels lose Pujols but Trout leads them past Athletics

OAKLAND, CALIF. —

Mike Trout doesn't have many days where he goes without a hit. When he does, the Angels' slugger tends to bounce back in a hurry.

A day after going hitless with three strikeouts, Trout was back in form doing what he does best in a stadium that has quickly become his home away from home.

Trout homered and drove in three runs, Johnny Giavotella hit a tiebreaking single in the seventh inning and the Los Angeles Angels held on to beat the Oakland Athletics 6-3 on Wednesday night.

"That's why we play 162," Trout said. "You can't hang your head down on one game. Just turn the page. Don't think about it."

Trout hit his fifth home run with two outs in the third then doubled in two with the bases loaded in the seventh to help the Angels pull away and end a two-game losing skid.

Erick Aybar added a two-run single as Los Angeles matched its second-highest run in two weeks despite losing first baseman Albert Pujols to a leg injury in the sixth.

"He didn't really feel a pop. It was more a little bit crampish," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "We're definitely going to error on the side of caution. Right now we're optimistic that it's not going to be too long."

Fernando Salas (1-1) retired three batters for the win while Huston Street pitched the ninth for his eighth save in eight tries.

Marcus Semien had three hits and scored twice for Oakland. The A's have lost five of six.

Los Angeles had been held to three runs or fewer in seven of its previous 10 games before breaking out against Oakland.

Giavotella's one-out single off A's reliever Ryan Cook (0-1) put the Angels up 4-3. After Kole Calhoun walked to load the bases, Trout doubled to left to drive in C.J. Cron and Giavotella.

"That's what (Trout) does," Oakland manager Bob Melvin said. "We were in a bind with the bases loaded and nowhere to put him. That's why he's the MVP."

It's the Angels 10th win in the last 14 games against the A's.

Aybar's two-run single off Oakland starter Jesse Hahn put the Angels ahead 2-0.

Trout extended the lead with his fifth home run of the season, a solo shot that landed halfway up the stands in left field. It was the 10th homer of Trout's career hit at the O.co Coliseum -- the most by any visiting player since the Angels slugger made his big league debut in 2011.

Stephen Vogt's RBI single off Angels starter Matt Shoemaker cut the lead to 3-1.

Ike Davis doubled in Semien in the sixth and Josh Reddick followed with a single off reliever Cesar Ramos that tied the score at 3.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Angels: C Chris Iannetta returned to the lineup after missing the series opener due to a cut finger.

Athletics: Ben Zobrist spent 20 minutes riding a stationary bicycle after undergoing knee surgery a day earlier. ...

OF Coco Crisp (elbow) will join Single-A Stockton for two days of hitting later this week but the biggest hurdle remains throwing, according to head athletic trainer Nick Paparesta. ... Closer Sean Doolittle (strained rotator cuff) will throw off a mound Thursday for the second time this week. ... INF Tyler Ladendorf underwent left ankle surgery Wednesday.

UP NEXT

Angels: RHP Garrett Richards (1-1) pitches the series finale and has lost three of four decisions against Oakland in his career, the only team he has a losing record against.

Athletics: RHP Jesse Chavez (0-1) makes his second start and is likely to remain in Oakland's rotation after subbing in for Hahn on April 23.

Angels-Athletics Preview

Struggling to consistently generate offense, the Los Angeles Angels likely can't afford to be without slugger Albert Pujols for too long.

The visiting Angels won't have the veteran first baseman for at least Thursday's series finale against the Oakland Athletics.

As Los Angeles (10-11) enjoyed some much-needed success at the plate Wednesday, Pujols left after experiencing tightness in his left hamstring while running to first base on a bloop single in the sixth inning of the 6-3 victory.

Though Pujols is batting .208, he's 5 for 15 in the last four games.

"He didn't really feel a pop. It was more a little bit crampish," said manager Mike Scioscia, who doesn't believe Pujols is headed to the disabled list. "We're definitely going to error on the side of caution. Right now we're optimistic that it's not going to be too long."

A lengthy stretch without Pujols would obviously be a big blow for Los Angeles, which ranks near the bottom of the majors batting .226 and has scored more than four runs twice in 11 games.

However, the Angels hope reigning AL MVP Mike Trout is about to heat up after he belted a solo homer and a two-run double for his first multi-hit game since April 17.

"Everybody has a role on this team and if we stay with that approach we'll be fine," said Trout, who was 5 for 34 with a homer, two RBIs and 12 strikeouts in the previous 10 games.

Teammate Garrett Richards (1-1, 3.75 ERA) allowed two runs and three hits in seven innings of Friday's 3-2 victory over Texas to earn his first win since Aug. 15. The right-hander suffered a season-ending knee injury in his next start.

Richards, who endured a rigorous rehab to return to the mound April 19, has declared himself fully healthy after two starts.

"One hundred percent," Richards told MLB's official website. "I worked very hard over the offseason to get back to where I am now. For anybody that thought it wasn't going to be that easy, hard work goes a long way."

Richards, however, hasn't had always had an easy time while going 0-2 with a 6.38 ERA in four starts at Oakland.

Josh Reddick is 5 for 12 and walked three times against Richards. He's 11 for 22 with seven RBIs while hitting safely in seven consecutive contests.

A loser in five of six, Oakland (9-13) still might have a decent chance to take this series with Jesse Chavez (0-1, 0.71) facing Los Angeles for a second straight start.

After his first four 2015 appearances came in relief, Chavez yielded a two-run homer to Kole Calhoun over seven innings for the Angels' lone hit in last Thursday's 2-0 defeat. Though the right-hander is 0-2 in three starts versus Los Angeles, he's posted a 1.89 ERA and received two runs of support.

Chavez remains in the rotation for the time being after Kendall Graveman was sent down to Triple-A Nashville.

"It's just a different title change and role," Chavez said. "That's the way I look at it. I still have to go out there and do my job and take the ball whenever I'm asked, throw strikes, and give us the best chance to win and go as deep as I can in the ballgame."

Trout is batting .308 with two homers and a double versus Chavez.

FROM THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Josh Hamilton will respond to Scioscia in his own way

By Gerry Fraley

SURPRISE, Ariz — Texas Rangers outfielder Josh Hamilton on Wednesday said he will respond to criticism from Los Angeles Angels manager Mike Scioscia with his play.

On Tuesday, Scioscia said he was disappointed that Hamilton did not express remorse for what happened at the end of his time with the Angels. Hamilton did not join the Angels this year after self-reporting to Major League Baseball a violation of his after-care program for alcohol and drug addiction. The Angels traded him to the Rangers on Monday.

“For him not to show at least a little remorse toward his teammates I just think is wrong,” Scioscia told reporters. “It’s unfortunate he had his relapse but I know we supported him in every aspect whatever his needs were. Just in hearing some of his comments, the one thing I think is sad and I’m a little bit disappointed is the fact that there wasn’t any accountability most importantly to his teammates.”

Hamilton said he was unaware of Scioscia’s comments and was reluctant to respond.

“It doesn’t matter what he said,” Hamilton said. “It’s of no importance. I’m not there anymore. I’m here. I’ll try to do my responding the best way on the field against them.”

The Rangers are scheduled for 13 more games with the Angels. The next meeting will be on July 3-5, at Globe Life Park.