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Wednesday, May 27, 2015

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Detroit 1, Oakland 0: Price, pitching holds up for Tigers

May 27, 2015

By Anthony Fenech/ Detroit Free Press

OAKLAND, Calif. – It started off shaky – a hit here, a hit there, a high pitch count early – but David Price steadied the ship.

And after the Tigers' early lead held up through his seven innings, the back-end of the bullpen steered to victory.

Price was solid, the offense backed him with a run and they beat the Athletics, 1-0, on Tuesday night at O.co Coliseum.

"To have a game like I had today, you have to have some good stuff happen and I don't feel like I was at my best for the most part," he said. "You gotta be able to bear down."

And it took him some time, but without his best stuff, the left-handed ace finished strong. Price threw seven scoreless innings, allowing five hits, striking out three and walking one.

He stranded runners in each of the first five innings – two in three of them – but retired the final eight batters he faced and passed the baton to the triumvirate of Joba Chamberlain, Tom Gorzelanny and Joakim Soria to stop the Tigers' losing streak at three.

"That's why he's one of the better pitchers in the game," manager Brad Ausmus said. "He has the ability to get big outs when the game is on the line."

After "a lot of thought," Ausmus hooked Price at 109 pitches for Chamberlain in the eighth. He retired both men he faced before Gorzelanny allowed a single to Stephen Vogt and Soria, facing his second four-out save situation of the season, retired pinch-hitter Josh Reddick.

Soria stranded a two-out double in the ninth inning for his 14th save of the season.

The Tigers offense provided all the punch it needed in the first inning, courtesy of Anthony Gose's penchant for speed, when he singled then stole second base and reached third on a throwing error.

He scored one batter later on Rajai Davis' sacrifice fly to rightfield.

The Tigers totaled five hits off A's right-hander Jesse Chavez, who shut them down after the first inning.

Chavez threw eight innings, allowing one run. He struck out four and walked two.

"It's fun to be a part of those games," Price said. "It's even more fun to come out on top."

He is 4-1 on the season and the Tigers are 9-1 in his starts.

It's just a great team win," he said. "And we continue to do that on my day so that's good."

Tigers' Simon out today; Ryan to start if he makes it

May 27, 2015

By Anthony Fenech/ Detroit Free Press

OAKLAND, Calif. – Alfredo Simon will not pitch today.

The Detroit Tigers have placed the right-hander on the bereavement list, as he travels back to the Dominican Republic to visit his father, who is gravely ill, manager Brad Ausmus said after Tuesday night's win over the Athletics.

Left-hander Kyle Ryan will be called up from Triple-A Toledo to make the start, but that start is not set in stone as Ryan might be unable to make it to the west coast in time for today's first pitch, scheduled for 3:35 p.m.

Detroit time.

"We don't know if he'll make it here in time," Ausmus said. "If he'll be here at the beginning of the game or if he would have to rush so much that it would even be worth him trying to start the game."

Ausmus said the Tigers anticipate Ryan will be in uniform by the game time but "It's a small window" and couldn't guarantee the starting nod.

"I don't know if he'll be rushing or how much sleep he got, he's obviously going to wake up early," Ausmus said.

After missing out on a bullpen spot this spring, Ryan is 0-5 with a 4.67 ERA in Toledo this year. The other options to start, Ausmus said, would be "someone in the bullpen."

The most likely option in the case Ryan doesn't start would appear to be right-hander Alex Wilson, who has thrown more than one inning on six occasions this year and three or more innings three times.

Wilson, 28, was a starting pitcher coming up in the Red Sox organization.

Left-handers Blaine Hardy and Tom Gorzelanny could also be called upon, but Hardy threw on three consecutive days before Tuesday and Gorzelanny pitched in Tuesday night's game.

Gorzelanny, 32, has 121 big-league starts to his name.

Ausmus wasn't sure when Simon would rejoin the team.

Verlander's simulated game a success; rehab start next?

May 27, 2015

By Anthony Fenech/ Detroit Free Press

OAKLAND, Calif. – It was simulated, from the national anthem to the wave to Justin Verlander trying to talk his way into another inning.

And it was a success, Verlander's first simulated game in over a month, and it could set up his first minor-league rehabilitation start.

"It went really well," the Tigers' right-hander said. "Obviously first and foremost, the most important thing was I felt really good. Stuff was good — it got better as it went along — so all-in-all, I was very pleased."

Verlander threw 70 pitches over 4 1/3 innings. He faced Bryan Holaday, Tyler Collins, Hernan Perez and rookie Dixon Machado and his pitching line looked like this: Two hits, one walk, eight strikeouts.

Manager Brad Ausmus said the finish on his fastball and the break on his breaking pitches is what stood out.

The true test will come with how he feels this morning.

"I'm very optimistic I'm going to feel great tomorrow, just judging on going through the process before and how I felt throwing and how I responded to that," Verlander said. "Today is completely different than it was then so I don't anticipate anything besides normal soreness."

Verlander's second simulated game of the season — his first, in Pittsburgh during the second week of the season, was cut short — garnered more fanfare inside the Tigers' clubhouse.

Many Tigers watched from the sidelines, including Tuesday night's starter David Price, who was live-tweeting the event to the masses. Bullpen coach Mick Billmeyer was one of a few that attempted to start the wave and when Machado led off the second inning with a single, they pulled the ball from play.

"It was a lot of fun," Verlander said. "We treated it about as real as we can. The guys in the stands who tried to get the wave going — the fans weren't very receptive to it.

"It was great. Those guys cheering me, cheering Machado for the first hit, it was great."

Verlander threw all his pitches and reported no hesitancy in throwing breaking balls, specifically his curveball. He mentioned a change in throwing his slider, tweaking the release point in his time off and called it more of a "true slider."

After four innings, Verlander tried to get another inning but Ausmus and Tigers pitching coach Jeff Jones settled on a few more pitches, and he finished the outing by striking out Perez swinging.

"I tried to lobby for one more inning so maybe I could lobby not to make a rehab start but they weren't having it," Verlander said.

He could throw 80-85 pitches in a potential rehab start, he guessed, and, "I would think if I can throw 95-100, I would be ready to go."

Detroit 1, Oakland 0: Why the Tigers won

May 27, 2015

By Anthony Fenech/ Detroit Free Press

At O.co Coliseum, Oakland, Calif.

What happened: It was the Tigers' fifth shutout of the season. David Price earned the win, pitching seven shutout innings. Anthony Gose singled, stole second base, advanced to third on an error and scored on a Rajai Davis sacrifice fly for the only run of the game. Joakim Soria earned a four-out save, his 14th save of the season. The Tigers picked up a game on the Royals. They trail in the American League Central by two games.

Starting off: Price battled his way through seven scoreless innings. His pitch count climbed early and he stranded eight runners on base, but retired the final eight batters he faced. "I felt good, I felt good all night I was just kind of fighting myself in a couple different situations, but that's part of it," Price said. He struck out three and walked one over 109 pitches.

At the plate: Miguel Cabrera extended his hitting streak to 13 games in the ninth inning. He went 1-for-4. Gose and Andrew Romine each had two hits.

On the bases: The Tigers were thrown out three times trying to steal second. On two of them, manager Brad Ausmus had the hit-and-run play on. On the third, Rajai Davis missed a red light sign.

Overseen: After Billy Burns singled to start the game, an errant pickoff throw by David Price prompted Miguel Cabrera to try the hidden-ball trick. After the wide throw, the Tigers' first baseman ran towards foul territory, as if the ball had gotten by him. Burns didn't bite.

Overheard: "It was entertaining," Ausmus said of Cabrera's hidden-ball fake.

Three stars: 1. Price; 2. Gose; 3. Soria.

Up next: Wednesday vs. Oakland.

Hernan Perez looking to get more at-bats to end slump

May 27, 2015

By Anthony Fenech/ Detroit Free Press

OAKLAND, Calif. – Hernan Perez knows his role.

And right now, his role as the Tigers' second utilityman isn't affording him many opportunities at the plate. And because of that, he hasn't been able to hit himself out of an early-season slump.

"I just have to deal with it," Perez said before his first career start at first base in the team's series opener against the Athletics on Monday. "Just keep working in the cage."

Perez was back in the starting lineup for a second straight game Tuesday, playing second base in place of Ian Kinsler, who received his first off day of the season.

It marked the first time Perez has started two consecutive games this season.

"We need to kind of get him going so we need to get him some at-bats," manager Brad Ausmus said a day earlier. "He's a much better hitter than he's shown. He's just gotten into a funk, and the problem is, to get out of a funk, you have to play and he hasn't really had the opportunity to play, so he hasn't really gotten out of the funk."

Perez was hitting .074 (2-for-27) entering Tuesday's game with 10 strikeouts. He didn't have a hit since April 27.

"It's tough, and he's used to playing," Ausmus said. "In the minor leagues, he's always played, so it's tough. Unfortunately for Hernan, we have a lineup that's pretty set. It's just the nature of it, you know? So it's just a tough situation, and that's why I'm hoping to get him some at-bats a little bit to get him going."

Price stifles A's as Tigers eke out a victory

May 27, 2015

By Lynn Henning/ The Detroit News

Oakland, Calif. — When his team is scoring one run in 18 innings, a pitcher with an eye on winning had better pitch shutout baseball.

David Price did.

And, so too, did his mop-up help, as the Tigers got the most from the least Tuesday night in winning, 1-0, over the Oakland A's at O.co Coliseum, and putting a stop to their three-game losing streak.

"It's why he's one of the better pitchers in the game," said Brad Ausmus, whose team gained a game on the Royals with Tuesday's triumph.

Price got an improbable victory, and not only because the Tigers — who conspired in a 4-0 dud of a defeat Monday against the A's — got a lone first-inning run that held up.

Price, in fact, was not the streamlined machine he often is in putting down an enemy team minus a run.

He never had a 1-2-3 inning against the A's until the sixth. And not until he vanquished the A's with a six-up, six-out stretch over the sixth and seventh did it look as if his early and rising pitch-count would allow him to hang around deep into the game.

"Some things that went on kept tacking on pitches and made it seem as if he wasn't throwing great," Ausmus said. "But he was actually throwing the ball pretty well."

The Tigers left-hander, whose ERA is 2.97 and whose record is now 4-1, allowed the A's a five-hit ration and continually closed out what could have been damaging innings by the A's.

"I felt good — I felt good all night," Price said as he fought to talk against some booming Latino music in the Tigers clubhouse. "I was kind of fighting myself in a couple of situations, but that's part of it."

The Tigers, of course, were matching Oakland's puny offense with more of their own feeble firepower. They got only six hits, all singles, and if it weren't for one of those messy errors Oakland so often donates, the Tigers and A's might still be playing.

So intent was manager Ausmus on shaking at least another run from his scoring-starved gang — and avoiding their constant double plays — he had the Tigers running for much of the night, generally into a tag by the A's infielders.

Three times during the seventh, eighth, and ninth innings the Tigers tried to swipe a base. Three times Phegley's throws sniped them.

It was a Phegley throw that didn't behave that factored in the run.

Anthony Gose slapped a leadoff single to left and quickly made a bid to steal second as No. 2 hitter Rajai Davis settled in. Phegley fired a misguided missile of a throw that sailed past second baseman Ben Zobrist and into center field. Gose rose and barreled into third on the error.

Davis hoisted a sacrifice fly to center field that sent Gose sprinting home with the only run Price and the Tigers needed.

The A's might have cracked Price's cool any number of times, with their best shots coming in the third, fourth, and fifth.

But each time, Price got a strikeout, a short fly ball, or a ground ball that kept Oakland blanked.

He also got help from his allies in the field. Gose was the blue-ribbon winner there when he turned and rambled all the way to the center-field fence to grab Marcus Semien's fifth-inning drive.

That put-out came one batter before Zobrist drove a ground-rule double over the same center-field wall.

Price was excused after the seventh, having thrown 109 pitches.

"I was going to bring him out for the eighth," Ausmus said.

But that changed when he reflected on Joba Chamberlain's handsome career numbers against the first two A's hitters, Zobrist and Billy Butler.

Chamberlain dusted off each on ground balls, at which point Ausmus brought in Tom Gorzelanny to duel with left-handed hitting Steven Vogt.

Vogt laced a liner that caromed off Hernan Perez's glove and bounced into right field, where shift-patrolling third baseman Andrew Romine grabbed it and nearly tossed out Vogt.

Ausmus decided his faithful fireman, Joakim Soria, needed to shoot for a rare four-out save. He was called in to liquidate Mark Canha, and did on a hard grounder that Soria gloved and finished with a throw to Cabrera at first.

"I know he'd probably prefer not to do it," said Ausmus, speaking of Soria's double-inning duty, "but I feel a bit more confident because he doesn't get high pitch-counts."

In the ninth, Soria was all but immaculate: grounder to third and pop fly to second ahead of a double to the left-center gap by fleet Sam Fuld.

That left Soria to finish off leadoff batter, Billy Burns, which he did neatly, getting Burns on a soft fly to left that ended the Tigers' losing skid and bought a stressed team at least one night of peace.

399: Kaline's last day short of history, long on regret

May 27, 2015

By Lynn Henning/ The Detroit News

Detroit — Imagine it's 2015 and Al Kaline is about to play the last big league game in a Hall of Fame career. His life and numbers would have been analyzed by all of Silicon Valley's technology and firepower. ESPN would have categorical breakdowns and comparisons crawling across TV screens and busting from its website. Baseball Prospectus, FanGraphs, explorations by historical baseball numbers crunchers Jay Jaffe and Dan Szymborski — Kaline's career would have been cracked open and sifted for every statistical shard of meaning and value.

There is no chance Kaline and baseball's world would be unaware that, with one more home run, a Tigers superstar could become the first American League player with 3,000 hits and 400 home runs, as was the case in 1974, when Kaline retired.

There is even less chance the Tigers outfielder would leave his final game after the third inning and two at-bats. There is no way Kaline would, or could, excuse himself from posterity. From being the first Tigers player to hit 400 home runs, an honor secured last weekend in St. Louis when Miguel Cabrera hit No. 400 against the Cardinals.

But history was brushed aside that last day he played in the big leagues, Oct. 2, 1974, at Tiger Stadium.

"It was my fault," Kaline said, sitting on a black leather sofa in the Tigers clubhouse as Detroit got ready for a night game against Milwaukee. "It was one of the worst, if not the worst, decisions I've ever made in my life.

"Sometimes when you make bad decisions you don't realize how it might hurt other people."

He was speaking of two parties — three, if you care to count Kaline.

First of all, fans. Many had turned out that day to see Kaline for the final time put on his soon-to-be-retired No. 6 jersey.

He also realized too late the player who replaced him that cold autumn Wednesday afternoon, Ben Oglivie, would be booed by plenty of the final-day customers when Oglivie came to bat in the fifth.

"I really felt bad for Ben," Kaline recalled, shaking his head at a decision made impulsively, almost angrily.

It cost him at least two at-bats and two shots at that 400-homer plateau no American League player with 3,000 hits would reach until Red Sox star Carl Yastrzemski did it in 1979.

"Back in those days, statistics weren't as important," Kaline said, trying to explain the inexplicable. "You didn't have ESPN. And I didn't realize 400 homers would be quite such a milestone.

"And, really, statistics are a great conversation piece, but I've never been a stats guy. Eras in baseball are all different. The game changes so much. I knew how many great hitters had hit 400 or 500 home runs, and to me it wasn't like I was in their class."

'I've had it'

The game Kaline wishes he could have back unfolded in low-key fashion, minus any majesty, despite the knowledge this would be his last rodeo. The Tigers were about to finish with a 72-90 record and in sixth place in what then was a 12-team, two-division American League.

The first-place Orioles were in town. Starting for them was left-hander Mike Cuellar, who in 1969 had been a co-Cy Young Award winner alongside Tigers ace Denny McClain.

Kaline was Tigers manager Ralph Houk's designated hitter as the American League wrapped up its second year with the then-radical designated hitter.

In the first inning, Kaline, batting third, struck out looking. Not a big deal. He still had three at-bats, minimally, on the season's final day, 10 weeks before he would turn 40.

Third inning. The Tigers were leading, 2-0 after Ron LeFlore, who scored the first run, smacked a sacrifice fly that drove home Aurelio Rodriguez from third. Eddie Brinkman, who singled, was on second base, while John Knox was at first after Knox bunted for a single.

Cuellar was in trouble. Kaline was about to add to it — until his line drive to left was hauled in by Al Bumbry. Kaline was irked. It was cold, he just hit the ball on the screws and made an out, and as far as he was concerned it had been a career.

"I've had it," he told Houk.

And he was gone from baseball after 22 seasons as one of the game's elite two-way players. All his professional life had been spent with the Tigers at a time when free agency was still a landmark court decision and a couple of years of legal evolution from being part of baseball's mainstream.

Kaline, who has worked for the past 12 years as an assistant to Tigers front-office chief Dave Dombrowski, is no more bothered by the money he forfeited ahead of free agency than he is at missing a seat in that 3,000/400 penthouse.

He genuinely believes the power-hitters' elevation belongs more to Hank Aaron, to Ted Williams, to Mickey Mantle — as it eventually would for Cabrera — than it ever did to a 6-foot-1, 180-pound kid from Baltimore.

"I don't want people to think I'm trying to be modest," he said, speaking specifically of Cabrera, "but I'm not in his category. He is the best hitter I've ever seen in a Tigers uniform.

"In this game you know there's always someone who's gonna be better than you. There's always someone better, there's someone richer, poorer, stronger, weaker.

"My journey, to me, was unbelievable. I loved it. All the time during those years in Baltimore, living in that row house, all I ever wanted to be was just a baseball player. Later on, something like 400 homers wasn't that big of a deal."

Injuries costly

In fact, it never should have been an issue. Kaline had 400 homers-plus in the bag. At least he did until stuff happened, physical and atmospheric.

He lost two home runs to games that were washed out before they had a chance to become official. One vanished June 1, 1958, when he homered in the second inning against the White Sox at then-Briggs Stadium, only to have the game halted in the fourth before it was called.

The same thing happened in 1963, in a game against the Senators at D.C. Stadium in Washington, D.C. His second-inning homer off Bennie Daniels didn't survive rain and cancellation of that day's boxscore.

And then, of course, there were the injuries that cost him a cumulative 21/2 seasons: broken collarbone, broken finger, fractured arm. Considering he played 22 years, injuries were inevitable. But not, perhaps, to the extent he lost nearly 10 percent of his career to the disabled list.

The home runs simply didn't matter as much as that other statistical tribute to a great player's career: 3,000 hits, which Kaline had nailed down eight days earlier, against Orioles left-hander Dave McNally. It came by way of a double down the right-field line. And of all the places he would get his 3,000th, it happened to be in Baltimore, at Memorial Stadium, with his dad, Nicholas, and mother, Naomi, in the stands.

Kaline had made it known well ahead of September that 1974 would be his last season as a player. He had seen a personal idol, Willie Mays, hang on too long and fall down in center field during his final season with the Mets. And neither Kaline nor his wife of 60 years, Louise, wanted a career as accomplished as his to end on a pitiful note.

He took off his uniform that day at Tiger Stadium, got ready for a 40th birthday and, with anxiety he had not anticipated, began to wonder about a life without baseball.

"What do I do?" Kaline remembers of thoughts he says were nothing less than "scary" for a kid who had joined the Tigers out of high school in 1953 and who never played a day in the minor leagues.

"I don't have a job," he said, retracing his mind's steps during that autumn of 1974. "I don't have any education other than high school."

He would have considered managing in the minor leagues, perhaps at Toledo or some such regional stop, Kaline says, even though Toledo was then a Phillies affiliate.

"I would have done anything," he said last week.

But no more than the Red Wings knew quite what to do with Gordie Howe after Howe retired, the Tigers never viewed Kaline as a resource that could be happily plowed into their system.

Only when he moved to the Tigers television booth in 1977 as an analyst did Kaline's experience and insight begin to find an outlet, which evolved into owner Mike Ilitch naming him, as well as Willie Horton, a front-office assistant in 2001.

This has been a good fit, Kaline says. A great fit, really, for a man who still hits the ballpark regularly, who continues to invest in a single team and game all he has learned from a lifetime in baseball.

Tigers place Simon on bereavement leave

May 27, 2015

By Lynn Henning/ The Detroit News

Oakland, Calif. — The Tigers got a sad surprise late Tuesday evening when starting pitcher Alfredo Simon left the team to be with his seriously ill father in the Dominican Republic, knocking Simon from Wednesday's start against the A's at O.co Coliseum.

Simon is officially on bereavement leave and will be replaced by Triple A left-hander Kyle Ryan. But it is not certain if Ryan's flight will arrive in time for Wednesday's game (3:37 p.m., Detroit time).

If the schedule does not cooperate, Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said after Tuesday's 1-0 victory over the A's that he would be calling on relievers from his bullpen to start and complete Wednesday's game.

Blaine Hardy and Tom Gorzelanny, both left-handers, can pitch multiple innings, as can right-hander Alex Wilson.

"It could be a bullpen day," Ausmus said, acknowledging that there was a "small window" for Ryan's flight connections to put him in Oakland ahead by an early-afternoon start time.

Ryan, 23, pitched in six games for the Tigers in 2014 and made one start. This season for the Toledo Mud Hens, he is 0-5 with a 4.67 ERA and 1.39 WHIP. He has allowed nine earned runs in his last two starts.

More like it

A lineup that on Monday looked like something from a split-squad Grapefruit League game on Tuesday more resembled its old self.

Miguel Cabrera was back in his No. 3 spot in Ausmus' batting order after Cabrera was given a day off Monday to soothe an ankle that was operated on last November.

Cabrera was 1-for-4 Tuesday, which included a deep fly ball to the track in right-center field that was snagged by Sam Fuld.

The Tigers, however, were still waiting for Jose Iglesias to heal after he badly bruised a knee in a collision Saturday with Astros first baseman Chris Carter.

Ausmus was unsure Tuesday when Iglesias might return, although his layoff is expected to be brief.

"He's better today," Ausmus said. "But he's not ready yet."

Andrew Romine replaced Iglesias and had two of the Tigers' six singles. He also made a throwing error in the second when he tried to cut down Stephen Vogt, advancing from second to third on a ground ball, and hit Vogt with the relay, leaving runners at the corners with one out.

David Price, however, got out of that mess as he did others.

Also missing: second baseman Ian Kinsler, who got a day of rest following an 0-for-21 dive that has dropped his average to .282.

"He's scuffling a little," said Ausmus, who discussed with Kinsler the idea of a Tuesday vacation following Monday's game. "I thought it would be a good day to get him out."

Hernan Perez filled in for Kinsler and hit the ball hard three times. But he was put away three times as his batting average dropped to .069.

Double jeopardy

Double plays have been a Tigers trademark in 2015, and one they would appreciate shedding.

In that spirit, Ausmus had his baserunners sprinting Tuesday night. Four times the Tigers tried to either steal a base or, just as strategically, stay out of a double play. It worked only once, when Anthony Gose stole second in the first and moved to third on a bad throw by A's catcher Josh Phegley.

He subsequently scored on Rajai Davis' sacrifice fly.

"We're trying to do some stuff and avoid these double plays that suck the wind out of you," Ausmus said after Tuesday's game.

"We're trying to do something to get it going. It didn't always work tonight, and I don't know if it's something we'll do for the long term, but tried to do it tonight."

Farmer's flight

Buck Farmer was scheduled to report to Anaheim, Calif., on Wednesday as he prepared for a Thursday start against the Angels in Anaheim.

Farmer, a rookie right-hander, is replacing Kyle Lobstein, who is on the disabled list with a sore shoulder.

Lobstein had been filling in for Justin Verlander during Verlander's layoff because of a strained triceps.

The Tigers will need to send down a player from their 25-man roster ahead of Thursday's game. It is anticipated the player will be shortstop Dixon Machado, who was brought up from Triple A Toledo when Lobstein went on the DL.

The Tigers made the move as a temporary stop-gap solution to losing Iglesias for what was projected to be a few days. The time coincided with days between Lobstein's last start (Saturday) and his next turn in the rotation, which was to be Thursday's series opener against the Angels.

Cabrera tops

The first stage of All-Star Game voting was made public Tuesday, thanks to early returns on American League ballots.

Miguel Cabrera led all first basemen with 1,347,351 votes. Eric Hosmer of the Royals was second with 1,101,738.

Voting support for Kansas City players was overwhelming in the early phase of balloting, as evidenced by a host of Royals who led at their respective positions. Lorenzo Cain was the top votes-getter among outfielders, ahead of Angels star Mike Trout, while Alcides Escobar of the Royals was first among shortstops (1,191,268). Jose Iglesias of the Tigers was second (826,382).

Early voting for National League All-Stars will be revealed today.

Verlander looks and feels fine in simulated game

May 27, 2015

By Lynn Henning/ The Detroit News

Oakland, Calif. — Justin Verlander is expected to move to the Tigers farm system early next week for a rehab start as the next step in rejoining the rotation.

Verlander worked a 70-pitch simulated game Tuesday against Tigers hitters at O.co Coliseum, where Detroit played Oakland in a night game.

"The way I felt," Verlander said when asked about the best part of an outing geared to restoring his place in manager Brad Aumus' rotation. Verlander has been on the disabled list since late March because of a strained triceps muscle in his (right) throwing arm.

"It's the final step," he said. "I'm very optimistic."

Verlander pitched the equivalent of 4.1 innings before reaching his 70-pitch limit.

He allowed three singles, walked a batter, and struck out nine, including a 1-2-3 knockout inning.

"He looked really good," Ausmus said. "The hitters thought he looked good. Jonesy (pitching coach Jeff Jones) thought he looked good."

Asked what most impressed him about Verlander's outing, Ausmus said: "I think the finish on his fastball and the break on his breaking ball. He was better than I thought he would be."

Verlander will report today on how his arm feels following his first sustained pitching performance since spring training in Florida.

"If all goes well," Ausmus said, "five days from now he'll go on a rehab start."

The Tigers haven't determined where in the system that dress-rehearsal start will be made. Triple A Toledo would be the logical place. Toledo plays at Indianapolis on Sunday and begins a series at Columbus next Monday, logistics that would present no serious problem.

The Tigers affiliate at West Michigan, which is based outside of Grand Rapids, could offer convenience, but the team is in Ft. Wayne on Sunday and Monday.

All that mattered Tuesday to Verlander and the Tigers is the former Cy Young Award winner, once considered the most indispensable of players, is getting closer to regular work in Detroit.

"I think," Ausmus said, "he'll be quite fine."

Verlander worked typical innings against Tigers batters and took breaks between his half-inning stints, simulating the rhythms of a normal game.

"I was pleased with everything," said Verlander, as he got a fist-bump from Tigers reliever Blaine Hardy.

Verlander's first stay on the disabled list began March 29 in the waning days of spring camp at Lakeland, Fla.

The strain initially was diagnosed as not serious and Verlander was expected back early in April.

But his recovery was set back when arm fatigue and inflammation forced the Tigers to take a slower approach.

He gradually improved, with long-toss and bullpen sessions progressing to a point that Tuesday's game could set up tentative plans for a minor-league tune-up.

The Tigers aren't saying if one or more rehab starts might be in order before Verlander returns to work in Detroit.

Verlander, 32, was pushing for a rebound this season after his 2014 season was gouged by inconsistency and occasional inability to reconnect with his old power-pitching repertoire.

The reason, acknowledged by Verlander and by the Tigers, was that he had not entirely recovered from a sports hernia that required surgery in January 2014.

Verlander made 32 starts and pitched 206 innings. But his ERA jumped from 2.64 in 2012 and 3.46 in 2013 to 4.54 in 2014.

He got busy during the offseason, working on building strength and muscle (he added 20 pounds) designed to make him more reflective of a pitcher who won the Cy Young Award in 2011 and in 2012 finished second to David Price, who is now with the Tigers and who then pitched for the Rays.

His battle plan this season was intact — until the closing days of spring camp. Now, after his first experience in missing extended big-league time because of an injury, Verlander is moving closer to making his debut.

Armed with new pitch, Farmer ready for '15 debut

May 27, 2015

By Tony Paul/ The Detroit News

Buck Farmer, the Georgia native who played at Georgia Tech before being drafted by the Detroit Tigers, has never been to California.

In fact, he's never been west of Omaha, Nebraska.

That changes this week, when the young right-hander makes a spot start Thursday for the Tigers against the Angels in Anaheim.

"I know nothing about California. Nothing," Farmer said over the phone Tuesday afternoon. "A couple guys on Toledo's team are from California. Corey Jones told me where to go. I forget the area he said has some pretty good restaurants."

Farmer can scope things out when he flies into town the day before his start, if the time difference doesn't wipe him out first.

Thursday, though, will be all business -- and the only feasting he has in mind is on the Angels' lineup.

This will be the first start of the season for Detroit for Farmer, who had a couple cameos in 2014.

News travels fast

He got the news of his promotion Sunday -- from, of all places, the Internet.

"It's actually pretty funny," Farmer said. "I really didn't get told by anybody until I got to the field in Toledo that day. I pretty much learned through Twitter that I was getting called up. Obviously, I wasn't gonna put much speculation into that until I was actually told by somebody."

Buck Farmer: "I know nothing about California. Nothing."

When Farmer arrived at Fifth Third Field that day, Toledo manager Larry Parrish confirmed the news: He was to travel with the Mud Hens to Louisville, and then fly out Wednesday afternoon to meet up with the team -- after a layover in Dallas -- in Anaheim.

He's taking the place of Kyle Lobstein, who was put on the disabled list with a sore left shoulder.

The Tigers had Farmer, a 24-year-old right-hander, working as a starter in Toledo, so he'd be ready for any callup -- whether it be to start or relieve.

Farmer made four appearances in the majors last season. His debut was a good one, his second start was a rough one, and then he got a couple relief appearances as a September callup. Interestingly, he began 2015 at low Single-A West Michigan.

"Last year, I was hoping to end the year at high A, that was my goal," Farmer said, laughing.

This year, it was clear from Day 1 that if the Tigers needed a starting pitcher, the pecking order would be Lobstein -- who filled in nicely for Justin Verlander -- and then Farmer.

Farmer has been mostly great at Triple-A Toledo this season, outside of a couple clunker starts in late April and early May.

Farmer attributed those starts to being off mechanically, particularly with his balance. In bullpen sessions with pitching coach Mike Maroth, he worked on that -- by getting to the balance point in his delivery and then pausing there for a second.

The last four starts for Toledo, he had a 1.80 ERA, allowing only 18 hits in 25 innings. He had 15 strikeouts in the first two of those starts, then just three the last two. That might be attributed to Farmer's new weapon, a sinking two-seam fastball. Farmer said he threw maybe one or two of those a start in 2014 -- as just "show-me" pitches -- but that total is up to 15 to 20 this season. Thrown correctly, the pitch, trumpeted heavily by Maroth, gets more groundouts.

"It's always been a pitch that I've had trouble with -- one time it'd be really good, the next time it would cut or something," Farmer said of the two-seamer, which moves in on right-handers and away from left-handers.

"Mike Maroth really worked with me, told me it's something I need to learn, it's a big pitch.

"In the bullpens, I kept throwing it and throwing it and throwing it, and I've taken it out to the mound with me. It's helped."

Keep climbing

The two-seamer has helped Farmer get some quicker outs, which will be key Thursday against the Angels. He has yet to throw 100 pitches in a start for Toledo this season, so he won't go anywhere over 100 during his 2015 debut with the Tigers. Limiting the walks -- he's had at least one every start this year, as many as four (twice), and three his last time out -- and getting quick outs are his only hope to see the seventh inning. This is likely the first of two starts for Farmer with Detroit in the next 11 days. If Verlander is ready by the second week of June, then he would join the rotation and Lobstein, if healthy, could move to the bullpen. Or if Farmer impresses, he could stay and pitch in relief after his starts are through. That said, the Tigers' bullpen has actually been pretty good this year, and there might not be room for him once his spot-starting duties are over. Either way, Farmer is cool with it. He just wants to keep progressing. Last year, he progressed from low-A ball to the major leagues -- and this year, he's progressed all the way to that far-away land, California. "The only thing I know is I'm starting Thursday and will make the best of it," Farmer said. "And hopefully, I stay up there."

Tigers lineup getting back in order

May 27, 2015

By Lynn Henning/ The Detroit News

Oakland, Calif. — A lineup that Monday looked like something from a split-squad Grapefruit League game more resembled its old self as the Tigers got ready for a rematch against the A's at O.co Coliseum on Tuesday. Miguel Cabrera was back in his No. 3 spot after manager Brad Ausmus gave him a day off Monday to soothe an ankle that was operated on in November.

The Tigers paid the price for competing minus Cabrera, as well as starting shortstop Jose Iglesias. They were shut out on four singles in a 4-0 defeat that began a three-game trip to Oakland and will move to Anaheim, California, for a four-game series against the Angels.

The Tigers, however, still were waiting for Iglesias to heal after he badly bruised a knee in a collision with Astros first baseman Chris Carter.

Ausmus was unsure when Iglesias might return, although his layoff is expected to be brief.

"He's better," Ausmus said. "But he's not ready yet."

Set to start in place of Iglesias against the A's was Andrew Romine.

Also missing Tuesday: second baseman Ian Kinsler, who got a day of rest following an 0-for-21 dive that has dropped his average to .282.

"He's scuffling a little," said Ausmus, who discussed with Kinsler the idea of a Tuesday vacation following Monday's game. "I thought it would be a good day to get him out."

Hoping to boost Perez

Starting in place of Kinsler was Hernan Perez, who had a Monday cameo as Cabrera's replacement at first base. "We've got to get him some at-bats and see if we can get him going," Ausmus said of a utility man whose spring has been more of a nightmare, thanks to an .074 batting average.

The Tigers made Perez a member of their bench crew when they finalized their 25-man roster at the end of spring camp.

A big reason is that Perez, who turned 24 in March, is out of minor-league options and can't be returned to the farm unless he clears waivers.

The Tigers don't like the chances of Perez escaping waiver-wire exposure. They view him still as a prospect whose skills are potentially too valuable to give away.

They also know a young player who sees big-league pitching sparingly has little chance of finding his batting stroke. Hence, the move to not only give Kinsler a break but to try and jump-start the bat of a player whose time could be nearing an end in Detroit.

Machado expected to go

Buck Farmer was scheduled to report to Anaheim today as he prepared for his Thursday start against the Angels.

Farmer, a rookie right-hander, is replacing Kyle Lobstein, who is on the disabled list with a sore shoulder.

Lobstein had been filling in for Justin Verlander during Verlander's layoff because of a strained triceps.

The Tigers will need to send down a player from their 25-man roster ahead of Thursday's game. It is expected the player will be shortstop Dixon Machado, who was brought up from Triple A Toledo when Lobstein went on the disabled list.

The Tigers made the move as a stop-gap solution to losing Iglesias for what was projected to be a few days. The time coincided with days between Lobstein's last start (Saturday) and his next turn in the rotation, which was to be Thursday.

Cabrera tops first basemen

The first stage of All-Star Game voting was made public Tuesday, thanks to early returns on American League ballots.

Cabrera led all first basemen with 1,347,351 votes. Eric Hosmer of the Royals was second with 1,101,738.

Voting support for Kansas City players was overwhelming in the early phase of balloting, as evidenced by a host of Royals who led at their respective positions. Lorenzo Cain was the top votes-getter among outfielders,

ahead of Angels star Mike Trout, while Alcides Escobar was first among shortstop (1,191,268). Iglesias was second (826,382).

Early voting for National League All-Stars will be revealed today.

Analysis: Alfredo Simon's sad circumstance puts Detroit Tigers in tough situation on West Coast trip

May 27, 2015

By James Schmehl/ MLive.com

OAKLAND -- This much is true: Detroit will have a starting pitcher for Wednesday's game.

Just don't ask who.

The Tigers were dealt a sad surprise late Tuesday, one that has put them in a bit of a pickle for Wednesday's finale in Oakland, after Alfredo Simon, arguably the most consistent pitcher in Detroit's rotation, had to be placed on the bereavement list.

Simon was initially scheduled to start Wednesday against the Athletics, but the 34-year-old right-hander was suddenly called way from the team Tuesday to tend to his seriously ill father in the Dominican Republic.

At this point, it's unclear when he will return. But this much is clear: Simon won't start Wednesday.

So who will?

To fill Simon's spot on the active roster, the Tigers will bring up left-hander Kyle Ryan from Triple-A Toledo. A candidate to compete for a spot in Detroit's bullpen this past spring, Ryan is 0-5 with a 4.67 ERA in nine starts in Toledo this season.

Provided Ryan arrives in time, he will start Wednesday.

The problem? Wednesday's game is scheduled for 12:35 p.m. in Oakland and there's a slight possibility Ryan won't be with the team before first pitch.

So what's Plan B?

If Ryan is unable to start Wednesday's game, the Tigers will likely resort to using a bullpen start. Possible relief candidates who could be asked to start include left-handed relievers Blaine Hardy, Tom Gorzelanny and right-hander Alex Wilson.

Of the three names mentioned, Gorzelanny is the most experienced starter, making 121 career starts throughout his 11-year career. However, Gorzelanny hasn't started a game since 2010 and has been limited to throwing 1 2/3 innings or less in each of his 17 appearances for the Tigers this season.

Hardy, 28, has been used exclusively out of the bullpen this season, and has never made a major league start in his career. However, Hardy was being stretched out in preparation to start at Triple-A Toledo prior to being called up in early April and he's made 15 combined starts the past two seasons for the Mud Hens.

Wilson, meanwhile, was developed as a starting pitcher in his first four seasons in the Boston's minor league system, but he's been used exclusively as a reliever the last three seasons.

As of late Tuesday, Ausmus wasn't willing to identify who would start Wednesday if Ryan was no longer an option.

Really, any of the three relievers could probably start Wednesday. Truth be told, that's not the problem. The bigger issue is that whomever is asked to start Wednesday will likely be unable to pitch deep into the game. That includes Ryan.

As a result, several relievers will likely be needed Wednesday to eat some innings.

The Tigers' rotation is already shorthanded with both Justin Verlander and Kyle Lobstein on the disabled list.

Tigers highly touted rookie Buck Farmer will be called up from Toledo prior to Thursday's series opener in Anaheim to fill the spot in the rotation vacated by Lobstein, who was placed on the disabled list last week.

Which means several relievers will likely be needed Thursday to eat innings, too.

See the pattern here?

Simon's unfortunate circumstance could potentially handcuff the Tigers, who are in the midst of a seven-game West Coast road trip. With Farmer, an unproven rookie, scheduled to pitch Thursday, and the Tigers' next off day not scheduled until Monday, the Tigers' bullpen could be needed -- a lot -- this week.

Fortunately for the Tigers, David Price gave Detroit's bullpen a much-needed break Tuesday by working seven shutout innings. But it still might not be enough.

Detroit's bullpen seems to be in good shape heading into Wednesday's game. But with the identity of Wednesday's starter up in the air, and a rookie scheduled to start Thursday, that could change real quick.

Detroit Tigers place Alfredo Simon on bereavement list, bring up Kyle Ryan from Triple-A Toledo

May 27, 2015

By James Schmehl/MLive.com

OAKLAND -- The Detroit Tigers were dealt an unfortunate blow late Tuesday when starter Alfredo Simon was placed on the bereavement list due to a family emergency.

Tigers manager Brad Ausmus indicated after Tuesday's game that Simon was called away due to tend to his father and didn't know when he would return.

Players on the bereavement list can be there for a minimum of three days and a maximum of seven. Simon departed from Oakland and traveled to the Dominican Republic late Tuesday to be with his father, who is "gravely ill," according to Ausmus.

To fill Simon's spot on the active roster, the Tigers will bring up left-hander Kyle Ryan from Triple-A Toledo. A candidate to compete for a spot in Detroit's bullpen this spring, Ryan is 0-5 with a 4.67 ERA in nine starts in Toledo this season.

Ryan will start, provided he can arrive prior to first pitch, which is scheduled for 12:35 p.m. Otherwise, the Tigers could be forced to use a bullpen start.

Tigers 1, A's 0: David Price, Detroit's bullpen combine for seven-hit shutout in Oakland

May 27, 2015

By James Schmehl/MLive.com

OAKLAND -- It certainly wasn't David Price's finest performance in a Tigers uniform, but Detroit's ace somehow managed to shut Oakland down for seven innings Tuesday night.

And Detroit's bullpen did the rest.

A day after being dealt their first shutout of the 2015 season, the Tigers returned the favor in Oakland as Price and the back end of Detroit's bullpen allowed a combined seven hits en route to a 1-0 victory.

The win snapped a three-game losing streak for the Tigers, who moved within two games of first-place Kansas City in the AL Central Division.

Making his first appearance since blowing his first save of the season last Thursday, Tigers closer Joakim Soria worked the final four outs to convert his 14th save this season. It's the second time this season Soria has worked a four-out save.

The Tigers (27-20) improved to 9-1 in Price's starts this season.

Offensive troubles once again plagued the Tigers, who managed just six hits and have now been limited to one run in their last 18 innings. They scored a run two batters into the game, but failed to advance a runner beyond second base the next eight innings.

After being limited to just four hits against A's starter Jesse Hahn on Monday, the Tigers mustered only five against Oakland right-hander Jesse Chavez, who matched a career high with eight innings pitched. Chavez entered Tuesday's start with a 9.90 ERA in nine career appearances against the Tigers.

Price worked around a handful of jams as the A's failed to capitalize on a handful of scoring opportunities, stranding a total of nine baserunners. The A's went 0 for 10 with runners in scoring position and have now combined for just six runs of support in Chavez's seven starts this season.

Detroit Tigers' Justin Verlander optimistic after simulated game: 'I felt really good'

Detroit Tigers starting pitcher Justin Verlander struck out nine batters and threw 4 1/3 shutout innings in a highly anticipated simulated game Tuesday in Oakland.

Tigers' highlights

- The A's brought the game-winning run to the plate with two outs in the ninth after Sam Fuld doubled to the wall, but Soria got A's rookie Billy Burns to pop out to end the game and snap the A's three-game winning streak.
- The Tigers scored a run two batters into the game when Anthony Gose scored on Rajai Davis' sacrifice fly. Gose led off with a single, stole second base and advanced to third base on a throwing error to set up Davis' RBI sac fly.
- Price, who entered Tuesday's start with a 3.69 ERA in seven career appearances against Oakland, limited the A's to five hits. It marked the fourth start this season that Price has pitched seven or more innings and allowed one run or less.
- Price needed just 13 pitches to work a 1-2-3 seventh inning and exited the game with 106 pitches. He was replaced by Joba Chamberlain, who induced back-to-back soft groundouts before being replaced by Tom Gorzelanny.
- Miguel Cabrera extended his hitting streak to 13 games with a single in the ninth inning. He has three doubles, a triple, five home runs and 11 RBIs during his streak. It's the longest streak by a Tigers player this season.

Tigers' lowlights

- Tigers shortstop Andrew Romine was charged with a throwing error in the second inning when his throw to third base struck Stephen Vogt on the back on the head. The error didn't prove to be costly as Vogt, who remained in the game, was stranded at third base after Price retired the next two batters he faced in order.
- Oakland rookie Billy Burns made a diving catch on the run in center field to take an extra-base hit away from Cabrera, who returned to the lineup Tuesday after missing Monday's game with a sore right ankle.
- Gose stole second base in the first inning, but Yoenis Cespedes, Andrew Romine and Rajai Davis were all caught stealing at some point in the game.

- The Tigers grounded into one double play Tuesday and have now grounded into an MLB-high 52 double plays this season. They have grounded into at least one double play in 16 consecutive games.

Game notes

- Oakland activated closer Sean Doolittle from the disabled list Tuesday. Doolittle will not be immediately re-installed as the closer, A's manager Bob Melvin told reporters Monday, but will first pitch in a handful of non-save situations.

- Oakland second baseman Ben Zobrist returned to the starting lineup Tuesday after being activated from 15-day disabled list Monday. Zobrist, who hit third, had been sidelined since April 24 while recovering from a knee injury.

- For the first time this season, Tigers second baseman Ian Kinsler, who is mired in a 0 for 21 slump, was held out of Detroit's starting lineup. Super utility player Hernan Perez got the start at second base in Kinsler's place.

- A's third baseman Brett Lawrie returned to the starting lineup Tuesday after sitting out three straight games with tightness in his back.

- Tigers shortstop Jose Iglesias was held out of the starting lineup for a third straight game Tuesday. Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said Iglesias was "feeling better today, but he's not ready yet."

Miguel Cabrera leads AL first basemen in All-Star voting; Jose Iglesias ranks second among shortstops

May 27, 2015

By James Schmehl/MLive.com

OAKLAND -- Miguel Cabrera is on track to be named the starting first baseman for the American League All-Star team for a second consecutive year.

The first All-Star ballot update was released on Tuesday, and Cabrera currently leads all AL first basemen in balloting, outpacing Royals counterpart Eric Hosmer.

Cabrera, an All-Star in each of the last five seasons, ranks third among all AL players in balloting with 1,347,351 total votes. He trails Kansas City outfielder Lorenzo Cain and catcher Salvador Perez, who leads all AL players in balloting with 1,447,753 votes. Hosmer, meanwhile, trails Cabrera by about 245,000 total votes. A two-time AL MVP, Cabrera entered Tuesday with a league-leading .446 on-base percentage, and has hit .344 with 11 home runs and 32 RBIs this season.

"I'd be more surprised if he wasn't (leading at first base)," manager Brad Ausmus said of Cabrera, who has been named to nine All-Star games in his 13-year career.

As of Tuesday, Cabrera is the only Tigers player in line to be named to the AL's starting lineup. Five Royals players are in line for starting spots, while three other Royals currently sit in second. Among those in line for a starting spot is Alcides Escobar, who leads Jose Iglesias by about 365,000 votes at shortstop.

Iglesias ranks first among shortstops in the AL with a .333 batting average, but has missed the past three games with a contusion in his left knee. He's listed day to day, but it's unclear when he'll be ready to return to the starting lineup.

"I think it's too early to say if he's an All-Star or not," Ausmus said of Iglesias. "If he can get back healthy and play out the first half the way he played the first two months, I would think it'd be a very viable possibility."

Tigers left fielder Yoenis Cespedes ranks fifth among AL outfielders in balloting, the top three of whom are in line for starting spots. Ian Kinsler, meanwhile, ranks third among American League second basemen behind Jose Altuve and Omar Infante.

Surprisingly, Tigers designated hitter Victor Martinez, who is on the 15-day disabled list with left knee inflammation, is fifth in balloting at designated hitter, despite hitting .216 with just one home run and 15 RBIs this season.

Detroit Tigers' Justin Verlander sharp in simulated game, on track to begin rehab assignment early next week

May 27, 2015

By James Schmehl/ MLive.com

OAKLAND -- The Detroit Tigers were shut out again Tuesday. And that's a good thing.

Justin Verlander took a big step towards rejoining the Tigers when he struck out nine Tigers -- who served as batters -- and tossed 4 1/3 shutout innings in his first simulated game since mid-April.

He was only scheduled to pitch four innings, but successfully lobbied to face one more batter after the fourth inning and capped his strong outing with a four-pitch strikeout.

"It went really well," said Verlander, who has been sidelined since March 29 with a triceps strain. "But first and foremost, the most important thing, I felt really good."

It marked the first simulated game for Verlander since he had a simulated game cut short in Pittsburgh on April 15 after feeling soreness in his throwing arm.

This time, Verlander reported no discomfort or fatigue.

"It was very encouraging," Verlander said. "I had no problem getting loose. It felt really, and it was also really encouraging."

The Tigers will wait until Wednesday to see how Verlander's arm responds to the simulated game. If the 32-year-old starting pitcher reports no discomfort, there's a strong chance he'll begin a rehab assignment early next week.

"I'm actually not anxious," Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said. "I think he's going to be fine, quite frankly. But me thinking that doesn't mean he will be."

It's unclear where Verlander would be assigned or how many rehab appearances he'd need to make before rejoining the Tigers. However, he may require only one or two starts in order to rebuild the arm strength needed to throw around 100 pitches.

Verlander threw 70 pitches Tuesday -- including a mix of sliders, curveballs and changeups -- and gave up just three hits, all singles. He said he wasn't the least bit hesitant to throw his curveball -- the pitch he threw March 27 when he initially felt his arm tighten up in a Grapefruit League start against the Toronto Blue Jays.

"I thought he looked really good," Ausmus said. "The hitters thought he looked good and (Tigers pitching coach Jeff Jones) thought he looked good."

With bullpen catcher Jeff Kunkel serving as both catcher and plate umpire, Verlander struck out the side in the third inning, getting Bryan Holaday and Tyler Collins to watch called third strikes before Hernan Perez whiffed at a third strike.

The stadium's radar gun at O.co Coliseum wasn't turned on during the simulated game, but Ausmus said he was impressed with the finish on Verlander's fastball.

"And the break on his breaking balls -- they both looked really good," Ausmus said. "Better than I thought they were for where he's at."

Known for being a creature of habit, Verlander mimicked his routine during regular starts, going as far as simulating the national anthem before he took the mound. Following each inning pitched, he'd sit in the Tigers' dugout for five or six minutes.

In an effort to better replicate the atmosphere of a regular season game, several Tigers players watched his outing from seats and attempted to do the wave. Tigers reliever Joba Chamberlain went as far as playing the role of a concession stand vendor in the stands, selling imaginary hot dogs and beer between innings.

"We treated it about as real as you can," Verlander said. "The guys in the stands tried to get the wave going, but the fans weren't very receptive to it. It was great."

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Price stopper: Lefty stymies A's, snaps Tigers' skid

May 27, 2015

By Alex Espinoza and Rick Eymer/ MLB.com

OAKLAND -- David Price pitched seven shutout innings and the Tigers took advantage of an early A's error to claim a 1-0 victory at the Coliseum on Tuesday night.

Oakland catcher Josh Phegley committed a throwing error trying to nab Anthony Gose on a steal attempt at second base after he singled to lead off the game. Gose came around to score when Rajai Davis lifted a sacrifice fly to right-center field the next at-bat.

"All I had to do was put the ball in play with the infield back," Davis said. "I was trying to hit a grounder to second base. I didn't have to do too much."

Price allowed five hits and a walk while striking out three, moving his record to 4-1 and ERA to 2.97. A's starter Jesse Chavez (1-5, 2.44 ERA) held his own in a hard-luck loss, giving up the unearned run, five hits and two walks while striking out four over eight innings.

"Any win is good," Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said. "The pitching was outstanding. Price did a nice job and we did a nice job behind him. He got the big outs when he needed. This is not ideal. We're close to busting out over an extended stretch."

Miguel Cabrera singled in the ninth to extend his hitting streak to 13 games. Joakim Soria got the final four outs for his 14th save.

"I know he'd rather not do that on a regular basis," Ausmus said of Soria's 1 1/3 innings. "I would prefer not doing it either, but if I feel like it's the best way to win, I will do it."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Leading off: Gose was the perfect model of a leadoff hitter in the first inning. He singled, stole second and scurried to third when the throw went into center field. He was able to score standing up when Davis drove a fly ball into right-center field. His 15 multihit games are just outside the AL Top 10. He also increased his batting average against right-handers to .349, surpassing Cabrera (.343) for the team lead.

"He's been doing that all year," Davis said of Gose. "He's playing with a lot of confidence right now. He's coming into his own."

Missed opportunities: The A's were able to make Price labor and put runners on base, but they couldn't capitalize. Oakland went 0-for-11 with runners in scoring position and left 10 runners on base. The A's are now 1-10 against left-handed starters.

"It's tough, but it's just a well-fought game from both sides," Phegley said. "Price is a good pitcher and he did his job." More >

The Price is right: Price retired 10 of the final 11 batters he faced before turning it over to the bullpen. He did not allow a run in a game for the first time since his first start on April 6, and the Tigers improved to 9-1 in his outings.

"For a micro-second, I thought about letting Price go back out for the eighth," Ausmus said. "It really came down to Joba [Chamberlain's] numbers against the first two hitters in the inning." More >

Sharp Chavez: Price might have earned the victory, but Chavez was able to outlast him and pitched very effectively all night. Chavez faced one batter over the minimum across his final five frames of work. The eight innings tie a career high for Chavez, while the A's have received 28 straight innings with no earned runs from their starting pitching over the past four games. More >

QUOTABLE

"It was entertaining." -- Ausmus, on Cabrera's attempt to fool Billy Burns into leaving first base in the bottom of the first by faking an overthrow on a pickup attempt.

"I saw him catch the ball and I was ready to run to first base in case he left the bag. I was happy not to see the ball running down the right-field line. Burns goes first to third and it's a different scenario if that happens." -- Price, on Cabrera's play.

SOUND SMART WITH YOUR FRIENDS

With Phegley's defensive miscue in the first, the A's have now committed an MLB-worst 50 errors in 48 games. Their 30 unearned runs allowed are also the most in baseball.

WHAT'S NEXT

Tigers: Gose looks to continue his hot hitting in Wednesday's series finale against the A's. He's hit safely in 16 of his last 23 games and is hitting .348 during that stretch. Right-hander Alfredo Simon (5-2, 2.67 ERA) gets the start for the Tigers.

A's: Southpaw Scott Kazmir (2-3, 3.09 ERA) will take the mound in Wednesday's 12:35 p.m. PT series finale, seeking his first win since April 13. The veteran hasn't topped six innings in each of his five starts in May, going 0-3 with a 5.14 ERA in that span.

Price bears down, notches fourth win

May 27, 2015

By Ricky Eymmer/ MLB.com

OAKLAND -- When David Price starts for the Tigers, it seems to guarantee a win. At least that's what it seems like.

Price threw seven scoreless innings in the Tigers' 1-0 victory over the Athletics on Tuesday night, and he seemed to be in control at every step.

"I felt good all night," Price said. "I was fighting myself in a couple of situations, but that it's all a part of it. I was pitching to the situation."

Price has made 10 starts thus far and the Tigers have won nine of them, though the left-hander is 4-1 with a 2.97 ERA over a team-leading 66 2/3 innings.

His lone loss was spectacular: a 13-4 setback to the New York Yankees in which he gave up eight runs on 10 hits in 2 1/3 innings. His ERA took a pounding, but Price is 3-0 in six outings since.

"That's what makes him one of the better pitchers in the game," Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said. "He gets the big outs when needed."

Ausmus also pointed out that plays such as Andrew Romine's throwing error that allowed Stephen Vogt to reach third base after he advanced to second on a passed ball made it seem that Price was struggling more than he was.

"You have to be able to bear down," Price said. "I think I had the leadoff hitter on base in the first four innings. There were some pitches I didn't make, but good stuff happened."

Price, the 2012 American League Cy Young Award winner and a four-time All-Star, appreciated the effort given by A's starter Jesse Chavez.

"He was in command today," Price said. "It's fun to be part of that kind of game and even more fun when you end up winning."

Price can understand the frustration of a job well done without anything to show for it. In his five no-decisions, his ERA is 2.70.

"Chavez is 1-5 and his ERA is [2.44]," Price said. "I know how tough this game is. It's not happening for him."

Price is scheduled to start against the Angels in Anaheim on Sunday night. He's 4-4 with a 3.90 ERA against them. That's his most wins against an AL West opponent. He also threw his last shutout against the Angels on April 24, 2012.

Double plays becoming Tigers' nemesis

May 27, 2015

By Rick Eymer/ MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The Tigers have scored once in 18 innings against the Athletics and have split the first two games of their series following a 1-0 win on Tuesday night.

The Tigers were built with offense in mind, and they expect to score a lot of runs. Yet in 23 of their 47 games thus far, the Tigers have scored three runs or less and are 8-15 in those contests.

Part of the trouble is the Tigers' penchant for hitting into double plays. They lead the Majors with 52 grounded into double plays and have at least one in each of their past 16 games.

Manufacturing a run is out of character for the Tigers. They'd prefer plenty of hits and a steady supply of power. The Tigers manufactured a run against the A's on Tuesday night and made it stand thanks to David Price and the bullpen.

"We're trying to do some stuff to stay out of double plays that suck the wind out of you," Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said. "When you start a guy, you hope to have at least a runner on second. Sure, there's an out, but it's not a double play."

Ausmus said there were a couple of missed signs on the bases and a couple of missed hit-and-run opportunities.

"We tried to do something to get it going, but it didn't really work tonight," he said. "I don't think we'll have to do it all season."

When Anthony Gose scored in the first, Rajai Davis thought it was just the beginning.

"I thought we were going to score a lot more," Davis said. "Nonetheless, we had to find a way. We're here to win and we expect to win a lot more games than we lose."

Miggy leads AL first basemen in All-Star voting

May 27, 2015

By Jason Beck/ MLB.com

Much like on the field, Miguel Cabrera is off to a strong start at the ballot box in his quest for a third consecutive All-Star Game start. The reigning American League All-Star starter at first base is leading at the position again, outpacing Royals counterpart Eric Hosmer.

At this point, Cabrera is the only Tigers player leading at his position. He is not the only one on the club with a race on his hands. Slick-fielding Jose Iglesias currently ranks second to Alcides Escobar among AL shortstops, while his double-play partner Ian Kinsler is third among AL second basemen behind Jose Altuve and Omar Infante.

"I don't pay attention until it's gets closer to the game," Kinsler said. "Then it is something I pay attention to, because if you're playing, you want to be able to plan it with your family for the four days."

• VOTE NOW: Cast your All-Star ballot

Yoenis Cespedes ranks fifth among AL outfielders, the top three of whom will receive starting nods.

Cespedes said he doesn't pay attention to the voting, "but I think I'm ranked No. 5 right now," he said with a big grin.

Cabrera has the third-highest vote total among all AL players with 1,347,351 votes as of Tuesday's update. However, Hosmer sits just about 245,000 votes behind, making it the closest race of any AL position. The Royals' resurgence on the field reflects in the vote, with five Kansas City players currently in line for starting spots and three others in second.

"I'd be more surprised if he wasn't," Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said of Cabrera.

That surge includes Escobar, who leads Iglesias by about 365,000 votes despite the highlight reel of defensive plays Iglesias has put up as a resume.

"It's too early to say if he's an all-star or not," Ausmus said. "If he gets back healthy and plays out the first half like he has the first two months, he'd be a viable possibility."

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 11:59 p.m. ET. 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 text VOTA for a ballot in Spanish. Message and data rates may apply. Up to five messages. No purchase required. Reply STOP to cancel. Reply HELP for info.

Miggy leads at 1B in 1st @esurance #ASG Ballot update! Vote for all #ASGWorthy #Tigers now:

<http://t.co/m8HuaNea9S> pic.twitter.com/ELfD6qDdaj

— #VoteTigers (@tigers) May 26, 2015

Following the announcement of the 2015 All-Stars, be sure to return to MLB.com and cast your 2015 Esurance MLB All-Star Game Final Vote for the final player for each league's All-Star roster. On Tuesday, July 14, watch the 2015 All-Star Game live on FOX, and during the game visit MLB.com to submit your 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.

Verlander could make rehab start Monday

May 27, 2015

By Rick Eymer/ MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Justin Verlander said he felt good after pitching 4 1/3 innings of a simulated game before the Tigers played the Athletics Tuesday night.

"It went really well," said the 2011 American League Cy Young Award winner. "My stuff was good and I got better as I went along, which is to be expected after not throwing for so long."

The game featured a national anthem, 2012 Cy Young Award winner David Price's "live tweet-cast" and a hit from No. 10 prospect Dixon Machado, who went 0-for-3 in his big league debut Monday.

"We wanted to make it as close to game-like as we could," Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said. "There was no batting cage and he threw how many pitches it took to get three outs."

Vers final line for sim game...4.1 ip 3 hits (all 1bs) 1 BB 9ks 0 runs...I don't use the term domination lightly and he DOMINATED!!!

— David Price (@DAVIDprice14) May 26, 2015

Several Tigers went into the stands to try to start the "wave," even though the stands were pretty much empty.

"It was comical," Verlander said. "We had Price live tweeting it. It was a lot of fun. I wanted it as real as I could. It was great to have the guys cheering, and it was great to cheer Machado."

Machado, in his second full day in the Majors, got a base hit against Verlander, which led to an impromptu celebration and a presentation of the ball.

"He looked really good," Ausmus said. "The hitters thought he looked good and [pitching coach Jeff Jones] thought he looked good. A rehab start is his next step if he feels good tomorrow, and I think he's going to be fine. The break on his breaking ball was better than I thought given where he's at."

Verlander (right triceps strain) said there was no hesitation in throwing any of his pitches.

"I didn't pitch in as much as I would have, but the pitch sequencing was normal," Verlander said. "The guys' swings will tell you what you want to know."

If Verlander does feel good Wednesday, he'd likely make a rehab start on Monday, though where is yet to be determined.

Tigers scratch Simon, turn to Ryan in finale

May 27, 2015

By Rick Eymer/ MLB.com

Tigers right-hander Alfredo Simon left the team suddenly to be with his ailing father and will not make his scheduled start Wednesday.

Simon was placed on the bereavement list and the Tigers recalled left-hander Kyle Ryan from Triple-A Toledo. The Mud Hens were in Louisville on Tuesday night.

"We don't even know if he'll be here on time," Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said. "There's a small window if his plane is on time."

Ryan appeared in six games with the Tigers last year, including one start last Aug. 30. He was 2-0 with a 2.61 ERA. He's 0-5 with a 4.67 with the Mud Hens. He last pitched on Saturday.

The Athletics are going with Scott Kazmir (2-3, 3.09), a tough left-hander who owns a 1.85 home ERA and has yet to allow a home run in the Coliseum.

Ryan has never faced the Athletics.

Kazmir is 5-5 with a 3.51 ERA in 15 career starts vs. the Tigers. He was 1-0 with a 1.26 ERA in two starts vs. Detroit last year. Kazmir is 0-3 in five May starts with a 5.14 ERA.

Three things to know about this game

- It's a safe bet that former Athletics outfielder Rajai Davis will find his name penciled into the starting lineup. He has a better batting average and just as many extra base hits and RBIs against Kazmir as Miguel Cabrera, and in fewer plate appearances. Davis is 10-for-21 (.476) against Kazmir, with three doubles, a triple, a home run and six RBIs. Cabrera is 8-for-26 (.308) with five extra base hits, including two home runs, and six RBIs.
- Tigers left-hander Blaine Hardy has not allowed a run over his past 16 appearances, a span of 14 1/3 innings. That's the longest since Joaquin Benoit also went 16 straight two years ago. "He's done an excellent job," Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said. "Really the bullpen as a whole has done a pretty good job and Blaine is an important part of that."
- The A's will visit Detroit for a three-game series beginning Tuesday, and then they will not see each other again this year, unless it is in the playoffs.

Trammell, Cook to represent Tigers at Draft

May 27, 2015

By Mark Newman/ MLB.com

Three members of the 500 Home Run Club -- Ken Griffey Jr., Reggie Jackson and Mike Schmidt -- and 20 other former All-Stars will headline the list of team representatives on the floor at MLB Network's Studio 42 when the 2015 MLB Draft gets underway on June 8

MLB announced the annual list of club reps on Tuesday and it is clear that the 50th anniversary of the event will be celebrated in style on that first night of selections in Secaucus, N.J. Griffey, a likely first-ballot inductee next summer, will sit at the Mariners table in a room that includes current Hall of Famers including Jackson (Yankees table), Schmidt (Phillies), Tommy Lasorda (Dodgers), and Andre Dawson and Tony Perez (both Marlins).

Other former All-Stars who will represent the clubs include: Rick Aguilera (Twins), Bob Boone (Nationals), Johnny Damon (Royals), Ryan Dempster (Cubs), Gary DiSarcina (Angels), Steve Finley (Padres), Ryan Franklin (Cardinals), Ralph Garr (Braves), Luis Gonzalez and J.J. Putz (D-backs), Ben Sheets (Brewers), Lee Smith (Giants), Mario Soto (Reds), B.J. Surhoff (Orioles), Robby Thompson (Indians), Alan Trammell (Tigers), Tim Wakefield (Red Sox) and Jack Wilson (Pirates).

Surhoff (Milwaukee in 1985) and Griffey (Seattle in '87) were each No. 1 overall Draft picks.

MLB Network and MLB.com will have live coverage of the first night at this Draft, covering the top 70 picks -- or through Round 2 -- starting at 7 p.m. ET. MLB.com will provide live pick-by-pick coverage of Rounds 3-10 on Day 2, starting at 1 p.m. ET. Then rounds 11-40 can be heard live on MLB.com on June 10, beginning at noon ET.

Prior to the start of the Draft, MLB Network and MLB.com will air a Draft preview show starting at 6 ET. Of course, the previewing already is well underway. Go to MLB.com/draft to see the Top 100 Prospects list, projected top picks from MLB.com analysts Jim Callis and Jonathan Mayo, the 2015 order of selection and more. Follow @MLBDraft now to see what Draft hopefuls, clubs and experts are saying.

Arizona has the top overall pick, so the first table to see action on that Monday will feature a pair of former All-Stars on the phone with the club's war room back in Phoenix. Gonzalez was a fourth-round Draft pick by Houston in 1988 and Putz a sixth-rounder by Seattle in '99.

Shortstops Dansby Swanson of Vanderbilt and Brendan Rodgers of Lake Mary (Fla.) High were 1-2 in Callis' mock draft last week.

Ten clubs each have two selections in the first round: Astros (2 and 5), Rockies (3 and 27), Braves (14 and 28), Yankees (16 and 30), Giants (18 and 31), Pirates (19 and 32), Royals (21 and 33), Tigers (22 and 34), Dodgers (24 and 35) and Orioles (25 and 36). The Braves have a Major League-high five selections within the first 75 picks.

MLB Network's live coverage will feature news, analysis, interviews with club front office personnel and representatives, footage from club draft rooms, and features and interviews with prospects and newly drafted players. MLB Network's Greg Amsinger, Peter Gammons, Dan O'Dowd, Harold Reynolds and Mayo will anchor the live coverage with contributions from MLB Network's Darryl Hamilton, Al Leiter, Pedro Martinez, Dan Plesac, Bill Ripken, Sam Ryan, John Smoltz, Tom Verducci, Heidi Watney and Matt Yalof, as well as Callis and John Manuel of Baseball America.

MLB.com will provide Draft Tracker, the always-popular live interactive app that includes a searchable database of more than 1,500 draft-eligible players with statistics, scouting reports and video highlights. In addition to @MLBDraft for live updates and commentary, follow @MLBDraftTracker for tweets of all picks as they are made.

The full list of Draft reps are:

ARI: Luis Gonzalez, J.J. Putz

ATL: Ralph Garr, Greg McMichael

BAL: B.J. Surhoff, Tripp Norton

BOS: Tim Wakefield, Chris Pritchett

CHC: Ryan Dempster, Steve McFarland
CWS: Michael Huff, Kevin Coe
CIN: Mario Soto, John Ceprini
CLE: Robby Thompson
COL: Ryan Spilborghs, Gary Lawrence
DET: Alan Trammell, Murray Cook
HOU: Enos Cabell, Paul Ricciarni
KC: Johnny Damon, Art Stewart
LAA: Gary DiSarcina, Ralph Reyes
LAD: Tommy Lasorda, Hank Jones
MIA: Andre Dawson and Tony Perez
MIL: Ben Sheets, Tom Flanagan
MIN: Rick Aguilera, John Wilson
NYM: Mookie Wilson, Jeffrey Lebow
NYY: Reggie Jackson, Troy Afenir
OAK: Travis Buck
PHI: Mike Schmidt, Dan Goroff
PIT: Omar Moreno, Jack Wilson
SD: Steve Finley
SF: Lee Smith, Tony Siegle
SEA: Ken Griffey Jr., Roger Hansen
STL: Ryan Franklin
TB: Andy Sonnanstine
TEX: Mark McLemore
TOR: Mel Didier, Jay Stenhouse
WSH: Bob Boone, Johnny DiPuglia

Price pitches Tigers past Athletics

May 27, 2015

By Dave Hogg/ FOXSportsDetroit.com

On a night when he struck out only three batters, David Price used every inch of the spacious O.Co Coliseum. The Tigers didn't give David Price much room for error Tuesday night.

He had just enough, pitching seven innings in Detroit's 1-0 win in Oakland.

On a night when he struck out only three batters, Price used every inch of the spacious O.Co Coliseum. He got eight flyouts, including one that Anthony Gose ran down on the center-field warning track.

"What Gose has done for us in center field all year has been unreal," Price said. "I had some great defense behind me today."

Gose's catch might have saved the game, since the next batter, Ben Zobrist, smashed another ball to the same place. This one just eluded Gose's glove for what would have surely been an RBI double. Instead, Price was able to pitch out of another jam.

"I felt pretty good, but the game sped up on me a few times," he said. "I think they had runners in scoring position in each of the first five innings, but we were able to get out of it every time."

Tigers manager Brad Ausmus thinks that Price's ability to prevent big innings is one of the main reasons for his success.

"That's why he's one of the best pitchers in the game," Ausmus said. "He's able to step up and get big outs when the game is on the line."

Joba Chamberlain got two outs in the eighth and Joakim Soria recorded the final four, getting Billy Burns to fly out to end the game with the tying run on second base.

Three hours earlier, Gose had gotten Detroit off to a flying start. He led off the game with a single, stole second, took third on a wild throw and scored on Rajai Davis' sacrifice fly. That could have been the spark for the offensive explosion that the Tigers so badly need, but they only managed three more hits in the game.

"This isn't ideal," said Ausmus, whose team has scored once once in the first two games against the Athletics.

"We're due to bust out for a period of time, rather than just one game."

The Tigers tried running their way out of double-play situations, but Yoenis Cespedes, Kevin Romine and Davis were all caught stealing, and James McCann hit into the team's league-leading 52nd double play.

The Tigers are still on pace to break the major-league record for double plays, currently held by the 1990 Boston Red Sox.

On this night, all of that was a little easier to take, thanks to Price and Gose.

ROTATION CHANGE

After the game, Ausmus announced that Alfredo Simon had left the team and flown to the Dominican Republic to be with his gravely ill father. Simon was placed on the bereavement list and Kyle Ryan was recalled from Triple-A Toledo.

If Ryan can get to Oakland in time for Wednesday afternoon's game (3:30 on FOX Sports Detroit) and get some rest on the way, he will start the game. If not, the Tigers will use their bullpen to get through the game, with Blaine Hardy and Alex Wilson likely to pitch the early innings.

Simulated game goes well for Justin Verlander

May 27, 2015

By Dave Hogg/ FOXSportsDetroit.com

Justin Verlander pitched four shutout innings against his own offense in a simulated game Tuesday afternoon in Oakland.

The game, considered a key step in Verlander's return from a tricep injury, saw him throw 70 pitches to various teammates, while others watched happily from the stands. David Price, scheduled to start tonight against the Athletics, tweeted after the outing:

"Vers final line for sim game...4.1 ip 3 hits (all 1bs) 1 BB 9ks 0 runs...I don't use the term domination lightly and he DOMINATED!!!"

Bryan Holaday, one of the hitters Verlander faced, was also impressed, tweeting, "Sometimes you have to tip your cap."

If Verlander doesn't have any soreness Tuesday or Wednesday, the Tigers will be closer to sending him on a minor-league rehabilitation assignment. He's expected to start two or three times in the minors before rejoining the Tigers rotation.

A's lose 1-0 to Tigers

May 27, 2015

By Jimmy Durkin/ Oakland Tribune

OAKLAND -- Jesse Chavez's margin of error has been minuscule since he joined the starting rotation this year, and he felt the effects of that again Tuesday.

The Detroit Tigers scored an unearned run off Chavez in the first inning, and that was enough to hand the A's a 1-0 loss, ending their season-best three-game winning streak.

Chavez has received the second-worst run support in the major leagues, with the A's scoring just 1.86 runs per game in his seven starts. This was the second straight shutout with Chavez on the mound, and he fell to 1-5 despite lowering his ERA to 2.44.

"His win-loss isn't even close to indicative of how well he's pitched," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "He can't knock in runs. All he can do is pitch and keep the other team down, and he did that."

Chavez allowed five hits and two walks and was rarely challenged after allowing the first-inning run. Catcher Josh Phegley gunned down three attempted base stealers, but it was the one he didn't nab that hurt the A's. Detroit's Anthony Gose led off the game with a single, and Phegley said he didn't get a good grip initially when Gose attempted to steal second. Phegley hesitated, his timing got thrown off, and his throw went into center field. Gose moved to third on the A's league-leading 50th error.

Rajai Davis followed with a sacrifice fly, and that was enough to doom the A's, who went 0 for 11 with runners in scoring position and left 10 men on base.

"We had some opportunities, and in games like that, it takes a key hit," Melvin said.

Chavez's luck this year is so down that even Detroit starter David Price is taking notice.

"He's kind of been the tough-luck loser all year long," Price said of Chavez, who is seventh in the American League in ERA. "It's tough to see it. It's just not happening for him right now."

Chavez insists he's not bothered by his wilting win-loss record, only the team's, which is now 17-31.

"I don't worry about my own individual record, I just worry about the team's," he said. "I just try to give a good chance to win every five days."

The A's had opportunities to support Chavez, putting the leadoff hitter on board each of the first four innings against Price.

Oakland had runners at the corners with one out in the second inning, but Phegley's shallow flyout to center field wasn't deep enough to score Stephen Vogt from third base. Sam Fuld grounded out to end the inning. The A's had two on with one out in the third for Billy Butler, but he flied out, and Vogt followed with an inning-ending ground out. They had the same situation in the fourth, but Fuld struck out and Burns grounded out.

Ben Zobrist, playing in his first game after Monday's activation from the disabled list, hit a one-out double in the fifth inning. But Butler flied out and Vogt struck out.

The A's had one last shot when Fuld doubled with two outs in the ninth, but Burns popped out to end the game. A's general manager Billy Beane doesn't seem to be buying into former pitcher Dallas Braden's claim of widespread doctoring of baseballs during his time with Oakland.

"I didn't see the quote, but I have no idea what Dallas is talking about," Beane said a day after Braden detailed his method of doctoring balls on ESPN's "Baseball Tonight."

"We would have camp and in spring training, we would have different stations where you're learning," Braden said during the segment. "You've got your ... signs, pickoffs, bunt defense, run down responsibilities.

"And then we had a little station that was the application station. And here, gentlemen, we're going to learn how to gain an advantage or at least put ourselves in a little bit better position to gain control."

Braden, who pitched for the A's from 2007-11 and is best known for throwing a perfect game on Mother's Day in 2010, claims that's where minor leaguers would be trained on how to properly doctor a ball. Braden's strategy involved dabbing pine tar on his arm, followed by spraying it with sunscreen. He said he would reapply in between innings.

"An application station?" Beane said in response. "I have no idea what you are talking about."

The A's welcomed All-Star closer Sean Doolittle back to the active roster after he missed the first 47 games with a strained left rotator cuff. Angel Castro was sent to Triple-A. Melvin said Tyler Clippard will hold on to the closer duties for now as the A's try to slowly work Doolittle back into his regular ninth inning run." Right-hander Sonny Gray threw his regular bullpen session, and there were no issues with his right ankle. He was forced to leave his last start an inning after being hit by a ground ball.

After the first American League All-Star voting results were released Tuesday, Vogt is in second place in the balloting at catcher. He trails the Kansas City Royals' Salvador Perez by more than 650,000 votes. Marcus Semien is third in shortstop voting, and Josh Reddick is 11th in the outfield.

Wednesday's game

Detroit (TBA) at A's (Scott Kazmir 2-3), 12:35 p.m. CSNCA

Chavez saddled with another tough-luck loss

May 27, 2015

By Alex Espinoza/ MLB.com/ Oakland

OAKLAND -- Statistically speaking, Tuesday night's effort was the finest start of Jesse Chavez's career. Only he was saddled with another tough loss in a 1-0 defeat to the Tigers.

It marked just the second time in his career that Chavez finished eight frames, but his team was doomed by a throwing error in the first inning that led to a sacrifice fly. Despite Chavez's lights-out performance the rest of the night, it wasn't enough to get him back in the win column. Such is life for Chavez these days, who has tossed quality starts in five of his seven starts this year without much to show for it.

"Just tried to take it inning by inning and every at-bat by at-bat," Chavez said. "I didn't really look into it as, 'Oh, this is my best start of my career,' or anything like that. Just tried to give the guys a good chance to win and try to get them in as quick as possible."

Anthony Gose led off the game with a single against Chavez, one that scooted right past A's shortstop Marcus Semien. Gose then stole second and kept moving to third when an errant throw from catcher Josh Phegley ended up in center field, before Rajai Davis hit a sac fly.

That was the only major blemish against Chavez, whose ERA dropped to 2.44 while his record moved to 1-5.

"His win-loss isn't even close to indicative to how well he's pitched," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "He can't knock in runs. All he can do is pitch and keep the other team down, and he did that."

Melvin on Chavez, A's 1-0 loss

Melvin on Chavez, A's 1-0 loss

5/26/15: Athletics manager Bob Melvin discusses his team's 1-0 loss to the Tigers and talks about being content with Jesse Chavez's outing

Chavez allowed the unearned run, five hits and two walks while striking out four. The only other time he finished eight frames was May 12, 2014, when he gave up two earned runs to the White Sox.

But it's too bad for Chavez and the A's that Tigers southpaw David Price was able to shut them out for seven innings before the bullpen closed it out.

"Chavez threw the ball extremely well," Price said. "He's been a tough-luck loser all year long. I know how tough it is to see him go through that. The game is not happening for him right now, but he was in command today."

On Tuesday night, Chavez and Phegley chalked up the success to being able to mix up pitches while staying on the corners of the plate. Oakland's starters have gone four straight games (28 innings) without giving up an earned run, the first time in franchise history that's happened since Aug. 9-13, 1928.

"We just try to feed off of each other, and that's what we've been doing all year," Chavez said.

Instant Replay: Error spoils Chavez's outing, A's streak over

May 27, 2015

By Joe Stiglich/ CSNCalifornia.com

OAKLAND -- Hold the opponent to one unearned run over two games and a team has to like its chances of coming away with two victories.

So many things should have pointed the A's to a win Tuesday night. Instead, they were left to digest a 1-0 loss to the Detroit Tigers that snapped their three-game winning streak. A day after Jesse Hahn tossed his first career shutout, Jesse Chavez turned in eight sterling innings, but the A's couldn't reward the right-hander, going 0-for-11 with runners in scoring position and stranding 10 runners.

The game's only run scored before many fans found their seats. Detroit's Anthony Gose singled to lead off the game, stole second and advanced to third on catcher Josh Phegley's throwing error on the play. Rajai Davis hit a sacrifice fly and the Tigers had the only run they would need to tie this three-game series at one apiece.

Despite that game-changing error, the A's got several standout plays on defense – particularly from Stephen Vogt at first base. They got yet another terrific effort from a starter. They even got the tying run to second base with two outs in the ninth when Sam Fuld doubled. But Billy Burns flied out against Joakim Soria to end it.

Starting pitching report

It seems like a misprint to see Chavez with a 1-5 record and a 2.44 ERA. The right-hander was excellent Tuesday but went unrewarded. He tied his career-high by going eight innings and held Detroit to just an unearned run on five hits. That continued a string of excellent outings from A's starters. They've thrown 28 2/3 consecutive innings without allowing an earned run.

Chavez struck out four and walked two. Anthony Gose's run in the top of the first accounted for the only runner Chavez allowed past second base.

Bullpen report

Tyler Clippard gave up a hit and two walks but wound up tossing a scoreless ninth, as Oakland's relief corps has gotten a substantial rest in the past two games.

At the plate

The A's caught David Price on a night the 2012 AL Cy Young winner wasn't his sharpest. But despite getting the leadoff batter aboard in each of the first four innings, they couldn't break against the lefty as Price (4-1) threw seven scoreless innings. Oakland went 0-for-11 with runners in scoring position.

In the second, the A's put runners on the corners with one out, but Josh Phegley hit a fly to center that was too shallow to score Vogt and Sam Fuld grounded to short. They had two runners aboard with one out in the next inning but again came up empty.

They're now 1-10 in games started by a left-hander, and that's the worst such mark in the majors.

In the field

An early defensive miscue proved costly. Gose led off the game with a single and took off for second on a steal attempt. Josh Phegley's throw was wide of the bag and went into center, allowing Gose to advance to third. Rajai Davis scored him with a sacrifice fly, and just like that Oakland had allowed its major league-worst 30th unearned run.

There were some defensive bright spots too. Billy Burns made a diving catch in center to rob Miguel Cabrera in the first. Then Stephen Vogt, making just his second start of the season at first base, made a running, sliding catch of Rajai Davis' foul pop in the third. After his early throwing error, Phegley nailed three would-be base stealers at second with strong throws.

Marcus Semien had a couple hard-hit balls get past him for singles on plays that it seemed he had chances to make.

Attendance

The announced turnout was 22,758.

Up next

The A's have won their past three day games after losing 13 of their first 14, and trying to solve that one will only make you run for the aspirin. Scott Kazmir (2-3, 3.09) takes the ball in Wednesday's 12:35 p.m. game,

with Kyle Ryan expected to go for the Tigers. Alfredo Simon was originally scheduled to start Wednesday, but was placed on the bereavement list after Tuesday's game to attend to his sick father.

LAST UPDATED: WED, MAY 27, 2015, 02:08 EDT

TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2015

TEAM	PLAYER	TRANSACTION
Arizona Diamondbacks	Vidal Nuno	Called Up from Minors
Arizona Diamondbacks	Enrique Burgos	Placed on 15-Day DL, (Sore right shoulder)
Baltimore Orioles	Ryan Lavarney	Designated for Assignment
Baltimore Orioles	Steve Clevenger	Called Up from Minors
Baltimore Orioles	Matt Wieters	Sent to Minors, For Rehabilitation
Cleveland Indians	Brett Hayes	Outrighted to Minors
Cleveland Indians	Brett Hayes	Called Up from Minors, - Not to Report
Colorado Rockies	Yohan Flande	Sent to Minors
Colorado Rockies	Chris Rusin	Called Up from Minors
Kansas City Royals	Brandon Finnegan	Sent to Minors
Kansas City Royals	Jason Vargas	Removed From 15-Day DL, (Left flexor strain)
Los Angeles Angels	Grant Green	Called Up from Minors
Los Angeles Dodgers	Yasmani Grandal	Sent to Minors, For Rehabilitation
Miami Marlins	Michael Morse	Placed on 15-Day DL, (Right ring finger strain)

[Miami Marlins](#) [Jose Urena](#) Called Up from Minors

[Milwaukee Brewers](#) [David Goforth](#) Called Up from Minors

[Milwaukee Brewers](#) [Wily Peralta](#) Placed on 15-Day DL, (Strained left oblique)

[Minnesota Twins](#) [Oswaldo Arcia](#) Sent to Minors, For Rehabilitation

[Oakland Athletics](#) [Angel Castro](#) Sent to Minors

[Oakland Athletics](#) [Sean Doolittle](#) Recalled From Minors, Rehab Assignment

[Oakland Athletics](#) [Sean Doolittle](#) Removed From 15-Day DL, (Torn left rotator cuff)

[San Francisco Giants](#) [Casey McGehee](#) Sent to Minors

[Seattle Mariners](#) [Austin Jackson](#) Removed From 15-Day DL, (Sprained right ankle)

[Seattle Mariners](#) [Austin Jackson](#) Recalled From Minors, Rehab Assignment

[St. Louis Cardinals](#) [Jon Jay](#) Sent to Minors, For Rehabilitation

[Toronto Blue Jays](#) [Cole Garner](#) Signed to a Minor League Contract

[Toronto Blue Jays](#) [Dioner Navarro](#) Sent to Minors, For Rehabilitation

MONDAY, MAY 25, 2015

TEAM	PLAYER	TRANSACTION
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[Atlanta Braves](#) [Joey Terdoslavich](#) Sent to Minors, For Rehabilitation

[Baltimore Orioles](#) [Brian Matusz](#) Suspension Announced By League, (eight games)

Baltimore Orioles	Ryan Flaherty	Sent to Minors, For Rehabilitation
Cincinnati Reds	Manny Parra	Removed From 15-Day DL, (Neck strain)
Cincinnati Reds	Devin Mesoraco	Placed on 15-Day DL, (Left hip strain)
Kansas City Royals	Brandon Finnegan	Called Up from Minors
Kansas City Royals	Danny Duffy	Placed on 15-Day DL, (Left biceps tendinitis)
Kansas City Royals	Alex Rios	Sent to Minors, For Rehabilitation
Los Angeles Angels	C.J. Cron	Sent to Minors
New York Mets	Danny Muno	Called Up from Minors
Oakland Athletics	Craig Gentry	Sent to Minors
Oakland Athletics	Ben Zobrist	Removed From 15-Day DL, (Medial meniscus tear, left knee)
Oakland Athletics	Ben Zobrist	Recalled From Minors, Rehab Assignment
Oakland Athletics	Joe Paterson	Signed to a Minor League Contract
Pittsburgh Pirates	Charlie Morton	Recalled From Minors, Rehab Assignment
Pittsburgh Pirates	Radhames Liz	Designated for Assignment
Pittsburgh Pirates	Charlie Morton	Removed From 15-Day DL, (Hip injury)
San Francisco Giants	Travis Ishikawa	Removed From 15-Day DL, (Lower back strain)
San Francisco Giants	Travis Ishikawa	Recalled From Minors, Rehab Assignment

[San Francisco Giants](#) [Travis Ishikawa](#) Designated for Assignment

[Seattle Mariners](#) [Danny Farquhar](#) Sent to Minors

[Tampa Bay Rays](#) [James Loney](#) Placed on 15-Day DL, (Broken finger)

[Tampa Bay Rays](#) [Tim Beckham](#) Called Up from Minors

[Tampa Bay Rays](#) [Jake Elmore](#) Called Up from Minors

[Texas Rangers](#) [Josh Hamilton](#) Recalled From Minors, Rehab Assignment

[Texas Rangers](#) [Josh Hamilton](#) Removed From 15-Day DL, (Recovery from right shoulder surgery)

[Texas Rangers](#) [Neftali Feliz](#) Placed on 15-Day DL, (Axillary abscess on right side)

[Toronto Blue Jays](#) [Jose Reyes](#) Removed From 15-Day DL, (Cracked left rib)

[Toronto Blue Jays](#) [Munenori Kawasaki](#) Sent to Minors

[Toronto Blue Jays](#) [Jose Reyes](#) Recalled From Minors, Rehab Assignment

SUNDAY, MAY 24, 2015

TEAM	PLAYER	TRANSACTION
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[Baltimore Orioles](#) [Chaz Roe](#) Purchased From Minors

[Baltimore Orioles](#) [Wesley Wright](#) Transferred to 60-Day DL, (Left shoulder inflammation)

[Baltimore Orioles](#) [T.J. McFarland](#) Sent to Minors

[Boston Red Sox](#) [Jeff Bianchi](#) Purchased From Minors

Boston Red Sox	Shane Victorino	Placed on 15-Day DL, (Left calf tightness)
Boston Red Sox	Anthony Varvaro	Placed on 15-Day DL, (Right flexor strain)
Cleveland Indians	Yan Gomes	Removed From 15-Day DL, (Right knee sprain)
Cleveland Indians	Yan Gomes	Recalled From Minors, Rehab Assignment
Detroit Tigers	Kyle Lobstein	Placed on 15-Day DL, (Left shoulder soreness)
Detroit Tigers	Dixon Machado	Called Up from Minors
Los Angeles Angels	Mike Morin	Placed on 15-Day DL, (Left oblique strain)
Los Angeles Angels	Cam Bedrosian	Called Up from Minors
Miami Marlins	Jeff Mathis	Sent to Minors, For Rehabilitation
New York Mets	Johnny Monell	Sent to Minors
New York Yankees	Brendan Ryan	Transferred to 60-Day DL, (Strained right calf)
New York Yankees	Jacob Lindgren	Purchased From Minors
San Francisco Giants	Casey McGehee	Designated for Assignment
San Francisco Giants	Hunter Strickland	Called Up from Minors
Tampa Bay Rays	C.J. Riefenhauser	Sent to Minors, For Rehabilitation
Tampa Bay Rays	Ryan Brett	Sent to Minors, For Rehabilitation
Tampa Bay Rays	Preston Guilmet	Sent to Minors

Tampa Bay Rays	Preston Guilmet	Called Up from Minors
Texas Rangers	Jared Burton	Signed to a Minor League Contract
Washington Nationals	Taylor Jordan	Called Up from Minors
Washington Nationals	A.J. Cole	Sent to Minors
Washington Nationals	Kila Ka'aihue	Released