



*Clips*

**(April 4, 2017)**

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**FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES****Angels waste Mike Trout clout, losing to Athletics on opening day**

By Pedro Moura

The 2017 Angels will not have the support of a raucous fan base behind them, nor the benefit of the doubt from an industry skeptical of their offseason improvements. They will not have an end-to-end closer or an established ace, or a bunch of prospects envied by the sport. But they do still have the best baseball player in the world.

On the first day of this incipient season, before a rare sold-out crowd at the Oakland Coliseum, that was not good enough. Mike Trout supplied the Angels' only offense, hitting for more total bases than the rest of his teammates combined, but it was insufficient in a 4-2 opening-night loss to the Oakland Athletics.

"The first game of the year, you want to do so well, you get so anxious," Trout said. "I just told myself the whole game to calm down."

To begin the season, singles-hitting extraordinaire Yunel Escobar ripped a fastball from Oakland starter Kendall Graveman into right field for a single. Kole Calhoun followed with a first-pitch single, but a hard, poorly placed grounder from Trout produced two outs and killed the rally.

Matt Joyce, a debacle in his one season as an Angel, led off the second by following a C.J. Cron pop fly into foul territory and sliding to secure it, nearly at the feet of Angels relievers. With Andrelton Simmons on first base and two outs in the inning, Danny Espinosa flared a ball into short right field.

A decade ago, before defensive shifting exploded, the same hit would have fallen in between two Athletics fielders and the Angels would have had runners on the corners. Instead, second baseman Jed Lowrie was standing precisely where the ball landed before the pitch was delivered, and the inning was over.

Stephen Vogt battled the Angels starter Ricky Nolasco to eight pitches in the second inning, whereupon he received a sinker at the bottom of the strike zone. He hammered it just past the out-of-town scoreboard for a home run.

In the Angels half of the third, Calhoun battled back from an 0-and-2 count to earn an eight-pitch walk. Trout next approached the plate. The fifth fastball he saw, with the count 2 and 2, was on the outside corner. He anticipated it and shot it out to left-center field for a two-run home run.

To begin the bottom of the fifth, Lowrie rapped a single to right field, took second on a Trevor Plouffe groundout and scored a soft single into center by Yonder Alonso. The score was tied and Nolasco then issued a walk to No. 9 hitter Marcus Semien.

Beginning a potentially troublesome third time through the order, Nolasco delivered one of his best pitches of the night, a curve on the outside corner at which Rajai Davis flailed at for strike three. Joyce flew out to right to end the inning.

No one warmed up in the Angels bullpen as the bottom of the sixth began. Khris Davis, he of the 42 home runs last year, slammed the first pitch he saw for a no-doubt home run, and Oakland was ahead. Only when Vogt followed with a single did pitching coach Charles Nagy visit the mound and an Angels reliever, Bud Norris, begin to warm up.

Left-hander Jose Alvarez soon joined him. He replaced Nolasco two batters later and induced an inning-ending flyout from Alonso. Manager Mike Scioscia asked Norris to pitch the seventh and J.C. Ramirez the eighth. Norris completed the task without issue; Ramirez gave up a home run to Khris Davis, a single, two walks, and a balk before escaping.

Right-hander Ryan Dull entered for the seventh. He fired slider after slider at the bottom third of the Angels lineup, and they repeatedly swung, missed, and struck out. Left-hander Sean Doolittle began the eighth, and got Escobar to pop up into the great expanse that is the foul territory here, behind first base. Alonso over-slid for it, though, and extended Escobar another chance.

The third baseman fouled off another ball, then watched a 96-mph fastball graze the inside edge of the zone for strike three and crouched in frustration. Up next, Calhoun popped out into the opposite area, behind third base. In came right-hander Ryan Madson to face Trout.

Trout hit a double down the right-field line. The Athletics then ordered an intentional walk of Albert Pujols to face Cron, who tapped out to shortstop, finishing the inning. In the ninth, Santiago Casilla worked around a walk of Simmons to finish the game.

For the fourth consecutive season, the Angels lost their opener. For the third time in those four years, Trout hit a home run.

“It’s not a good feeling when you don’t win,” Trout said this time. “But we’ll come get ’em tomorrow.”

## **Relievers' roles not clearly defined by Angels manager Mike Scioscia**

By Pedro Moura

As of last week, Angels manager Mike Scioscia said he hoped to have a set closer he could call on Monday night, if his team held a tight lead late in its season opener against the Oakland Athletics.

It made sense for Cam Bedrosian to get the call. The 25-year-old right-hander throws as hard as anyone in the Angels’ bullpen, spins the steepest breaking ball, experienced the best 2016 season and did not give up a run in spring training.

But Bedrosian said Monday that Scioscia recently informed him that the Angels would deploy a committee of closers to begin the season.

“There might be nights when you’re closing,” Bedrosian said he was told. “There might be nights when other guys are closing. So it’s just soft roles right now. They’ll end up being more defined as the season goes on.”

Scioscia, told of Bedrosian’s comments, interjected to say that he never said that.

“The word committee never came out of my mouth,” he said.

He was then asked for his stance on his bullpen plans.

“I think we’ve got some really versatile arms that can pitch in high-leverage situations,” Scioscia said. “I think you want to keep accruing that depth and having those guys there. So, right now, we’re going to match up. If one guy, obviously, starts to separate himself and is a guy that is pitching to save games, so be it. I think we have a lot of versatility, a lot of good arms. We’ll go about it that way.”

He was then asked if he believed there to be a distinction between that approach and what is commonly known as closing by committee.

“I think there’s a different approach,” Scioscia said. “By committee, a lot of times it’s, if one guy’s down, someone just takes their place, and you rotate guys back there. There might be games when a perceived closer’s available and might be pitching in the eighth inning, for matchups. You know what I mean? It’s not by committee. It’s really going to be a versatile bullpen with the ability to match up.”

Asked who was in the mix to pitch in the late innings, Scioscia said the list could include nearly everybody. Right-hander Yusmeiro Petit was the lone exception, he said, because of his “functional length.” Scioscia would like to save Petit for potential extra-innings situations.

Veteran right-handers Andrew Bailey and Huston Street are the other pitchers that general manager Billy Eppler named during the offseason as part of the club’s closer competition. Street is currently injured, and Bailey struggled through the spring. Excluding Petit and Bailey, the club’s other relievers have four career saves among them.

Asked if he was OK with Scioscia’s choice, Bedrosian said it was not his decision.

“For me, it’s the same thing as always,” Bedrosian said. “Whenever they call down and tell me I’m in the game, I’ll go in and throw like I can. It’s a little different knowing you have one specific inning and you know you have to prepare for that inning, as opposed to when it could be the seventh, eighth or ninth.

“So, yeah, it’s a little different, but I try to treat it the same.”

### **Short hops**

Street will start throwing Tuesday in Anaheim, Scioscia said. The reliever has been sidelined since March 3 because of a lat strain. ...Scioscia said he did not expect it to be a challenge to incorporate reserve outfielder Ben Revere into his lineup regularly. Revere batted .411 in the spring while starting left fielder Cameron Maybin batted .188.

## Angels mailbag: Lots to talk about on opening day

By Pedro Moura

Hello, Angels fans. Welcome to the return of the Monday mailbag. Today is opening day for your favorite baseball team. Ricky Nolasco is going to face Kendall Graveman in Oakland. Here's some additional entertainment.

@pedromoura are the angels wasting danny espinosa's rocket arm at second base?

This is a question I considered during the spring. Espinosa has a strong arm, and he enjoys displaying it. His average competitive throw from shortstop last season led the major leagues at 90.7 mph, according to Statcast. The Angels' actual shortstop, Andrelton Simmons, was ninth among 36 qualified shortstops at 84.7 mph.

That doesn't mean Simmons has a weaker arm, only that he doesn't use all of it very often. Watch him play a game, and there's a good chance you'll see him dial up exactly enough arm strength to get the runner out. It's fun to observe. Espinosa, on the other hand, goes all out every time. It's what he's always done, he said, and he finds it more discouraging, as a runner, to be thrown out by a lot than a little.

I asked both men's backup, Cliff Pennington, about that early in March. As a shortstop who later learned how to play second base, he pointed out that Espinosa's surplus arm allows him to make up for mistakes with his footwork and angling. Espinosa has played plenty of second base in his past, but not as much as he has shortstop, and so errors due to unfamiliarity are bound to happen. Maybe the arm can minimize them.

@pedromoura have you been able to talk to Arte Moreno yet? You said last year he wasn't talking to mainstream media.

Yes. The Angels' owner agreed to answer a few questions early in spring training. I wrote about it here. He was around his team's camp more than in recent seasons.

@pedromoura Any prospects that impressed you during Spring Training

I didn't watch very many minor league games, because there were usually major league games going on at the same time. But in the few I did see, I was intrigued by 19-year-old outfielder Jahmai Jones.

In one back-field game, he ripped a ball to the center-field warning track and was nearly at second base when the opposing outfielder dove and caught it, somehow. It might've been the best catch I saw this spring. I have no idea who it was who caught it. Anyway, Jones took his helmet off and tipped it as he continued past second on to third. The inning was over, and Jones kept tipping his cap as the outfielder jogged back to his dugout.

Jones is raw but athletic and, team officials say, an intent learner of the game.

@pedromoura when Valbuena is healthy, what's the plan at 1B for the season, especially if Cron starts off hot?

When Valbuena is healthy, I expect him to play first regularly against right-handed pitching. The obvious option would be to platoon him and C.J. Cron, and just count on Cron eventually reversing his odd reverse splits trend. Trading Cron or Jefry Marte, a similarly skilled player who can also handle third base, is certainly an option.

@pedromoura is there any outcome you could think of that would be a success for the Angels with them not making the playoffs?

Financially or on the field? Because if it's only financially, I can think of a few, like a Mike Trout homer-record chase. On the field, pretty much the only way success is measured is the playoffs, so, no.

@pedromoura a bit far away, but do you think Heaney and Tropeano are locks for the 2018 rotation, or will Angels shop for pitching?

Tyler Skaggs' prolonged recovery from 2014 Tommy John surgery should instruct you that no return from that operation is a certainty, even when young. Sure, you'd expect both pitchers to be fit to pitch by then, but who can say for sure? If they are healthy, the Angels should have a pretty capable and cheap rotation of Garrett Richards, Matt Shoemaker, Skaggs, and those two. If they are not, yes, I imagine the organization will spend money on starting pitching. Richards is not under contract beyond 2018. It makes sense to push a lot of resources forward for that year.

@pedromoura why didn't the Angels take a chance and sign Greg Holland?

They took a few looks at Greg Holland, the 31-year-old ex-Kansas City closer. He signed for quite a bit of money, with more potentially vesting. He is recovering from Tommy John surgery.

@pedromoura Do we know if Huston has come to terms with not being a closer anymore? I know he'll say "we'll see" when he's healthy, but...

I don't think I would bet on Huston Street's career as a closer being finished. He had an extremely lengthy track record of success and one awful season. Someone will give him another chance, whether it's the Angels this year or someone else next year. He's due to return from his lat strain in a few weeks.

@pedromoura-watching highlights Dbacks vs Angels 3/27, I gasped when I saw Albert. R U seeing a very, very fat athlete? It's Albert+50lbs!

Albert Pujols is 37 years old. He has been playing professional baseball for half that time. He has had many surgeries along various parts of his legs. I think those factors, primarily, are making him slow.

@pedromoura will the Halos really be as bad as the predictions this year? Next to last in the west????

The American League West contains some pretty good squads this season. I would not be surprised if it was the division with the most wins at year's end. There is no awful team, and there are two pretty great lineups, in Houston and Texas. The Astros, in particular, should present problems.

So, while I would project the Angels to finish fourth in the division, that's more a comment on the division than it is an indictment of their team. I'd guess them to win around 81 games in 2017. I am also often wrong.

@pedromoura like your writing & podcasting but love your stance on vegetables. Plz do power rankings; cauliflower (all cruciferous) no. 1.

Some background: A couple weeks ago, I appeared as a guest on the Cincinnati Enquirer's Reds Beat podcast. There, we discussed vegetables, how great they are, and, because we are humans, how to rank them against each other.

Here's a vegetable power ranking I've assembled. It's entirely arbitrary, with grouping issues that will make some folks angry. I know not all squash is the same, but it's already long as is. I'd also like to note that I enjoy every vegetable on this list. My general stance on food is that everything is tasty when prepared with care and knowledge.

1. corn — So versatile, so tasty, so essential.

2. cauliflower — I recognize I am the high man on this and another cruciferous, but I think cauliflower is wonderful in four or five preparations. It also keeps for a long time.

3. sweet potato, 4. onion, 5. garlic, 6. eggplant, 7. Brussels sprouts, 8. carrot, 9. kale, 10. squash, 11. soybean, 12. arugula, 13. sunchoke, 14. tomato, 15. broccolini,

16. beet — I wish I knew how good beets are when I was a child. They are awesome when pickled.

17. potato, 18. radish/daikon, 19. broccolini, 20. shallot, 21. spinach, 22. artichoke, 23. zucchini, 24. lettuce, 25. parsnip, 26. kohlrabi, 27. scallion, 28. bok choy,

29. bell pepper — This was tough to rate, because the colors create a lot of variance. I could be convinced to move it 10 spots higher or lower.

30. fennel, 31. asparagus, 32. green bean, 33. broccoli, 34. yucca, 35. chicory/endive/radicchio, 36. cabbage, 37. jicama, 38. turnip/rutabaga, 39. leek, 40. snap pea/green pea, 41. cucumber, 42. okra.



**FROM THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER****Angels lose opener to A's despite Mike Trout homer**

By Jeff Fletcher

OAKLAND — Depending on your perspective, the Angels lineup was either half full or half empty on opening night.

Because they lost, 4-2, to the Oakland A's in the season opener on Monday, might as well go with half empty. Almost half, anyway.

Despite the top five hitters getting on base nine times — including a two-run homer and a double by Mike Trout — the bottom four came up with just one hit and they struck out eight times in 15 at-bats.

Cameron Maybin, Danny Espinosa and Martin Maldonado — all making their regular-season debuts for the Angels — combined for seven of the strikeouts and a double play. The only hit and the only walk among the players at the bottom of the order came from Andrelton Simmons, the No. 7 hitter.

“Those guys didn’t get it done tonight, but we have a lot of confidence our lineup will be deep and we’ll get all those groupings working,” Manager Mike Scioscia said.

The struggles by the players at the bottom of the order left the Angels unable to capitalize on nice performances at the top. It also left no margin for error for Nolasco, who felt his game came down to a couple pitches that ended up over the fence.

Through four innings, Nolasco had allowed just a solo homer to Stephen Vogt and he was efficiently getting through the lineup, with the help of a great catch by right fielder Kole Calhoun against the right-field wall to end the fourth.

“Ricky, outside of a couple mistakes, pitched well,” Scioscia said. “He pitched better than three runs showed. When push came to shove, he lost his command a little bit as the game went on. He hung the breaking ball to Davis.”

That was to Khris Davis, who is off to a good start in showing that last year’s 42-homer outburst wasn’t a fluke. He snapped a 2-2 tie by hammering a hanging slider from Nolasco in the sixth.

“The slider to Davis was the difference in the game,” Nolasco said. “It happens. Obviously I didn’t want to throw it there, but the guy does a good job and hits it out of the ballpark.”

Davis belted a second homer against reliever J.C. Ramirez in the eighth, providing an insurance run.

The offensive highlights for the Angels were not limited to Trout.

His third-inning two-run homer was set up by an impressive plate appearance from Calhoun. Calhoun fell behind 0-and-2 before battling his way to a walk.

Trout then got a 2-and-2 fastball over the inner half of the plate and he yanked it over the left-field fence, a rocket leaving his bat at 113 mph.

It marked the third time in Trout's career that he had hit a homer on opening day, tying him with Tim Salmon and Joe Rudi for the Angels record. He also went deep in the Angels' first game in 2014 and 2015.

"I put a good swing on it," Trout said. "A couple good at-bats tonight. You get into the season and you get so anxious and you want to do good."

Trout said he was a little over excited for his first at-bat, when he hit into a double play, and he had to "calm myself down" the rest of the game.

In the eighth, he doubled with two outs, putting himself into scoring position as the potential tying run.

Then, something new happened. Albert Pujols just trotted down to first base, the first Angels player to be given first without the formality of four pitches, part of the new intentional walk procedure.

"I looked up and he was on first base," Trout said. "It was a different. It took me a little bit to figure out what happened."

### **Miller: 2017 will test Angels' faith**

By Jeff Miller

OAKLAND - No one can be sure what precisely Cameron Maybin will bring to the Angels in 2017.

I mean, this is a player who hit below .250 from 2012-14 but then batted .315 last season, finishing with a higher on-base percentage than every Detroit regular other than Miguel Cabrera.

The Tigers traded Maybin anyway, something that now has happened to him five times, not exactly a reassuring trait for a guy the Angels are counting on to bring stability to left field.

I can, however, guarantee that Maybin, simply with his presence, bolsters the Angels' conviction, the importance of which can't be overstated in a season that figures to be stitched together with something no less fragile than collective belief.

"I believe in my faith, first and foremost," Maybin explained Monday, before the Angels lost their opener to the A's, 4-2. "For me to have doubt, that means my faith is wavering. That's not going to happen."

For that much at least, the Angels can be thankful, this being a team that has few other certainties, beyond, naturally, the ridiculously consistent brilliance of Mike Trout.

After grounding into a double play in his first at-bat of 2017, Trout homered in his second, a two-run laser to left field - official exit velocity: 113.4 mph - that exited Oakland's ballpark on a line and on a mission.

The home run was the third all-time on opening day for Trout, who, at age 25, already has tied the franchise record for such things.

Not that this development was shocking or anything, Trout's career on a pace that can be correctly measured only against the second hand of history.

Like everyone else, I don't think the Angels are playoff-quality. They lost 88 games a year ago, meaning just being average this season - 81-81 - would constitute a significant step forward.

Unlike Sports Illustrated, though, I don't think they'll be awful, SI having projected the Angels' victory total to drop to 72.

Of course, given that this particular magazine has a forecasting history so poor that it is said to be capable of casting curses, maybe Sports Illustrated's lack of belief is an encouraging sign.

The Angels do have plenty of potential to be decent, with, if all goes well, an adequate offense and a superior defense.

Kole Calhoun ended the fourth inning Monday with a leaping catch at the right-field wall that took a hit and likely RBI away from Stephen Vogt and left the mouth of pitcher Ricky Nolasco genuinely agape.

That's a sure indication that something spectacular has occurred, a highlight producing a reaction that also becomes a highlight.

The problem for the Angels is they need a whole lot more to go really right with their pitching staff, especially with a starting rotation that definitely could surprise or, just as easily, snap.

Baseball famously is a game of failure, and when's the last time you saw so many things that had to happen actually happen just perfectly for any one team?

Don't forget. The Chicago Cubs won the World Series last season, a century-shaking development that might have drained this sport of its geniality for generations to come.

The Angels are like a bunch of teams, their success desperately dependent on good health, performance and fortune. Just not necessarily in that order, the importance of luck another thing that can't be overstated.

With Maybin, thankfully, opening day finally showed up with his body intact and his legs beneath him, even if he did finish his Angels debut 0 for 4 with two strikeouts.

Maybin began two of the past three seasons on the disabled list and the third on the disoriented list.

Only hours before opening day in 2015, he was traded by San Diego to Atlanta, arriving just in time to join his new teammates for the traditional pregame introductions that, at the time, weren't entirely ceremonial.

Instead of wearing his name on his back that day, Maybin might have been better off with one of those “Hello, My Name Is ...” stickers on his front.

Here, however, he appeared legitimately relaxed and comfortable in a place that often isn’t either of those things for the opposition.

Before Monday, I’d never seen a tailgate party that featured grown men beating on a piñata fashioned in the likeness of Albert Pujols.

But Maybin seemed at ease for his first start as an Angel and his final day as a 20-something. Today, he turns 30, a veteran now in every sense.

“That’s something I pray for every day, my health,” Maybin said. “That’s always a big piece of the puzzle for a lot of guys. Knowing what I can provide when healthy, it’s exciting to be a part of this from the start. It’s a blessing this year.”

He’s blessed. And so are the Angels to have him, no matter what he produces in 2017, faith a necessity as much as ever for the guys with the halos on their hats.

### **Angels going long with unconventional bullpen composition**

By Jeff Fletcher

OAKLAND — The Angels opened the season with a bullpen that could be a sign of a different sort of pitching staff management.

Typically, a seven-man bullpen would have six pitchers who mostly worked in one-inning increments, and then one long reliever who saw most of his action when the starter got knocked out early and the team was behind.

But the Angels start out this season with three pitchers — Yusmeiro Petit, J.C. Ramirez and Bud Norris — who can all comfortably work two or even three innings, and not just when behind.

“We’ve got four- to six-out guys who can pitch in a 3-2 game in the seventh,” Scioscia said.

Scioscia added: “It has the potential to be a really unique bullpen and to be a very effective bullpen.”

One of the reasons the Angels may have built the team this way is that their starters may be limited. Garrett Richards, who is coming back from stem-cell therapy to repair a damaged elbow, is likely to be limited to around 100 pitches. Tyler Skaggs has also been rehabbing most of the last two seasons, and he sometimes gets into high pitch counts anyway. Jesse Chavez has been a reliever mostly in recent years.

Those three might all find themselves regularly coming out of games after just five innings, even when pitching well, which leaves a lot of outs for the bullpen to maneuver.

Norris, who has been a starter for most of his career, said he thinks the length the Angels have in the bullpen will be beneficial.

"I think that's huge," he said. "Sometimes crazy things happen over 162. you will need guys to get multiple (innings) instead of just three outs. That's a huge advantage for us."

### **Angels Notes: With a protective piece in his cap, Matt Shoemaker is ready to go**

By Jeff Fletcher

OAKLAND — Matt Shoemaker spent all spring experimenting with different types of protective devices inside his cap to see which, if any, he would wear when the season begins.

On the eve of his first start of the regular season, in which he will wear a protective piece, he said his wife, surprisingly, had no influence.

"She really doesn't mind," Shoemaker said. "She said 'You've got a titanium plate in there so you're probably good if it hits the same spot.'"

Shoemaker will pitch on Tuesday in Oakland, exactly seven months after his 2016 season was ended prematurely by a 105 mph line drive off the right side of his head. He had emergency brain surgery that night.

Now, Shoemaker has passed all the tests leading up to his return to the mound in the regular season, so much that he thinks nothing of the injury except when it's brought up by reporters.

"The last milestone I think was in the spring," Shoemaker said. "The game competition. When you're in that mode, that's what it's all about. I'm ready to go, that's for sure."

### **ALSO**

Luis Valbuena, who opened the season on the disabled list with a hamstring strain, has been hitting off a tee, Manager Mike Scioscia said. He is still "a couple weeks out" from being able to run, Scioscia said. He is expected back in late April, at the earliest...

When Ben Revere pinch hit in the ninth inning on Monday night, he became the 1,000th player in Angels history. They began the night at 995, but Danny Espinosa, Cameron Maybin, Martin Maldonado and Norris also debuted earlier in the game...

Reliever Austin Adams cleared waivers and was outrighted to Triple-A. ...

Maybin was the Angels' sixth opening day left fielder in the past six years. Vernon Wells was the last player to start consecutive seasons in left, in 2011-12...

Mike Trout became the first player in Angels history to make five opening day starts in center field.

**FROM ANGELS.COM****Trout's blast not enough as A's rally in opener**

By Maria Guardado and Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The A's powered their way past the Angels on Monday night, celebrating Opening Night in their home park with a pair of home runs from Khris Davis, and another off the bat of Stephen Vogt, in a 4-2 victory behind right-hander Kendall Graveman.

Their efforts overshadowed reigning American League MVP Mike Trout's first homer of the season, a two-run shot off Graveman in the third that temporarily gave the Angels the lead. Graveman made it through six innings in his first career Opening Night start, tallying seven strikeouts. He scattered six hits and walked two in the win.

"We talked before the game about everybody needing to contribute," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "I've been saying it all spring. Not only did Kendall give us what we needed, but we ran some bullpen guys out there that did what they were asked to do. We got a little bit of everything. Didn't make any mistakes, and that's what it takes to win close games like that."

A sell-out crowd at the Coliseum witnessed Vogt claim the first A's hit of the season, a solo homer to right off Angels starter Ricky Nolasco with one out in the second. Nolasco was also responsible for Davis' homer in the sixth that put the A's back on top, following Yonder Alonso's game-tying single in the fifth. Davis' second home run came in the eighth against right-hander JC Ramirez.

Davis, beginning his second season in green and gold, waited to hit his first home run of the 2016 season until his 14th game, yet he still managed to finish with 42. Six of them came against the Angels, who couldn't overcome his latest blasts. Davis finished with three hits and became just the second player in Oakland history to count off two homers on Opening Day, joining Jason Giambi (2000).

Nolasco yielded seven hits in the loss, a 5 2/3-inning performance that included two walks and four strikeouts. It was the right-hander's fourth time starting on Opening Night but his first with the Angels.

"I just think a couple of mistakes there to Vogt and to Davis kind of cost the game," Nolasco said. "But I felt good. I thought I was down in the zone for the most part and making pitches I needed to make. A couple of balls fell in, but the two balls I hung there were the difference in the game."

Along with Davis, Vogt and Jed Lowrie also turned in multihit efforts for the A's, who had dropped 11 of their previous 12 openers. The Angels have lost four consecutive Opening Night contests.

**MOMENTS THAT MATTERED**

Trout's laser: Trout briefly put the Angels in front, 2-1, with a two-run blast to left field off Graveman in the third. It had an exit velocity of 113.4 mph and a launch angle of 19 degrees, according to Statcast™. The Angels' star center fielder now has three career Opening Day home runs, tying Joe Rudi and Tim Salmon for the franchise record.

What a relief: Following Graveman's departure, the A's got a shutdown inning from right-hander Ryan Dull, who handled the task with ease. Dull, who enjoyed a fantastic rookie campaign last year, struck out the side in the seventh to maintain Oakland's lead. His bullpen mates followed suit, with the lefty-righty tandem of Sean Doolittle and Ryan Madson combining for a scoreless eighth. Right-hander Santiago Casilla, pitching for the A's for the first time since 2009, was awarded the ninth and recorded the save.

"The plan was if we got to the night inning, especially with the right-handers they have, he was going to pitch the ninth inning," Melvin said. "[He] did what we asked him to do. He's been in that situation before, but to be able to go out there in the first game after a little bit of a rough end to last year and close it out, I know was pretty rewarding for him and makes him feel good. Makes us feel good too."

Calhoun flashes leather: After Trout put the Angels ahead, 2-1, in the third, right fielder Kole Calhoun temporarily preserved the lead in the following inning with a leaping catch at the right-field wall to rob Vogt of a potential RBI double. Calhoun, a Gold Glove winner in '15, was visibly fired up after his outstanding grab, pumping his fist as he raced back to the dugout.

#### **SOUND SMART WITH YOUR FRIENDS**

Free-agent addition Ben Revere made his Angels debut when he pinch-hit for Martin Maldonado in the ninth and became the 1000th player in franchise history.

#### **WHAT'S NEXT**

**Angels:** Right-hander Matt Shoemaker will make his first start of the regular season on Tuesday night as the Angels and A's play the second game of their four-game series in Oakland. Shoemaker, who was struck on the head by a line drive in his last Major League outing in September, went 9-13 with a 3.88 ERA in 27 starts in '16. First pitch at the Coliseum is scheduled for 7:05 p.m. PT.

**A's:** Left-hander Sean Manaea is set to christen his second season in the Majors with a start against the Angels on Tuesday. Manaea went 7-9 with a 3.86 ERA in 25 games (24 starts) following his April 29 promotion last year and ranked second among American League rookies in strikeouts (124) and innings pitched (144 2/3).

#### **Trout, no doubt! Halos star hits OD laser**

Slugger matches franchise record with 3rd career HR to open season

By Maria Guardado / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- It didn't take long for Mike Trout to collect his first home run of the 2017 season.

The reigning American League MVP blasted a two-run shot off A's right-hander Kendall Graveman in the third inning of the Angels' 4-2 loss to the A's on Monday night at Oakland Coliseum.

After Kole Calhoun worked a two-out walk against Graveman, Trout hammered a 2-2 fastball to left field to put the Angels ahead, 2-1. The ball left the bat at 113.4 mph at a 19-degree launch angle and traveled

a projected 383 feet in 4.1 seconds, according to Statcast™. It was Trout's fourth-hardest hit home run of the Statcast™ Era.

"I put a good swing on it," Trout said. "A couple good at-bats tonight. You get into the season and you get so anxious and you want to do good. Keeping it simple helps you calm yourself."

Trout, 25, now has three career Opening Day home runs, tying Joe Rudi and Tim Salmon for the franchise record. His two previous inaugural blasts came in '14 and '15 off the Mariners' Felix Hernandez.

Trout also doubled in the eighth off Ryan Madson to put the tying run at second base with two outs for the Angels. The A's subsequently issued a no-pitch intentional walk to Albert Pujols, who became the first Angels player to be awarded an automatic walk under Major League Baseball's new rule.

"I looked up and he was on first base," Trout said. "It was a different. He was laughing, I was laughing. It took me a little bit to figure out what happened."

Still, Madson then induced a forceout from C.J. Cron, quashing the Angels' best hope for a late-inning rally. The Halos have now lost four consecutive season openers.

"It's not a good feeling when you don't win," Trout said. "But we'll come get them tomorrow."

### **Halos to utilize bullpen depth to close games**

With Street hurt, Bedrosian likely to get bulk of save opportunities

By Maria Guardado / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The Angels will enter the 2017 season without having officially named a closer.

Manager Mike Scioscia said Monday that the Angels will determine ninth-inning duties based on matchups rather than have one set closer. Still, he stopped short of labeling it a closer-by-committee approach.

"It's not by committee," Scioscia said before the Angels' season opener against the A's. "I think we've got some really versatile arms that can pitch in high-leverage situations. I think you want to keep accruing that depth and have those guys there, so right now we're going to match up. If one guy obviously starts to separate himself and is a guy that is pitching to save games, so be it. I think we have a lot of versatility, a lot of good arms. We'll go about it that way."

While he might not have the official title, it's hard to envision the Angels not deploying right-hander Cam Bedrosian in most save situations early this season. Bedrosian, 25, enjoyed a breakout year in 2016, recording a 1.12 ERA over 40 1/3 innings before undergoing season-ending surgery in September to repair a blood clot in his pitching arm. He didn't miss a beat this spring, tossing nine scoreless innings with 11 strikeouts.



The Angels had planned on having Bedrosian compete with veterans Huston Street and Andrew Bailey for the closer job this spring, but Street strained his right lat in his first Cactus League outing and will likely be sidelined until late April.

With Street injured, Bedrosian seems likely to open the season as the interim closer, though Scioscia said the rest of the Angels' bullpen, with the exception of Yusmeiro Petit, could be in the back-end mix. (Since Petit is stretched out, Scioscia said he would prefer to save the veteran right-hander for possible extra-inning situations.) The Halos' relief corps is currently comprised of Bedrosian, Bailey, Petit, JC Ramirez, Bud Norris, Jose Alvarez and Blake Parker.

### **Worth noting**

- Infielder Luis Valbuena, who has been out since March 22 with a strained right hamstring, is "making progress," Scioscia said.

"He's starting to swing off the tee, but not the type of running that you would need to see to be able to estimate when he's going to come back," Scioscia said. "He's still a couple weeks out."

- The Angels announced that right-hander Austin Adams cleared waivers and has been outrighted to Triple-A Salt Lake. Adams, acquired from the Indians in February, was designated for assignment on Saturday after posting a 9.82 ERA over 18 1/3 Cactus League innings.

### **Shoemaker returns to mound vs. Manaea, A's**

By Maria Guardado

OAKLAND -- Tuesday will mark seven months since Angels right-hander Matt Shoemaker was struck on the side of the head by a 105 mph line drive in September, leading to a frightening end to his 2016 season. But Shoemaker will complete his comeback when he takes the mound against the A's in the second game of the regular season at Oakland Coliseum.

"The last milestone I think was in the spring," Shoemaker said Monday. "The game competition. When you're in that mode, that's what it's about. I'm ready to go, for sure."

Shoemaker will start opposite A's left-hander Sean Manaea, who went 7-9 with a 3.86 ERA in '16 as a rookie and is now on his first Opening Day roster. Manaea, 25, is 0-1 with a 3.55 ERA in two career starts against the Angels, both of which took place in Anaheim.

Shoemaker, who was the Halos' steadiest pitcher in '16 with a 3.88 ERA over 27 starts, has decided to add an extra layer of safety for his skull by wearing protective headgear this season. He experimented with a few options this spring and settled on a small carbon-fiber plate from Safer Sports Technologies that he tucks on the inside of his cap to guard the right side of his head.

"What he went through is something that you just pray no player, let alone a pitcher, has to go through," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "When you're talking about injuries and all of sudden you talk about life-threatening injuries, it's just a different thing. It's remarkable really from Day 1, going out

there and throwing to hitters in Spring Training, that he showed early that there's no residual effect of what happened. He's going to go out there and pitch well."

Shoemaker, 30, is 4-2 with a 3.48 ERA in 10 career games against the A's.

### **Three things to know about this game**

- Manaea induced swings on 52.0 percent of his tracked pitches in '16, the highest rate of any pitcher who threw at least 2,000 pitches, according to Statcast. Interestingly enough, Shoemaker was second at 51.8 percent.
- A's catcher Stephen Vogt has 26 plate appearances against Shoemaker, the most of any opposing batters Shoemaker has faced. Vogt is 3-for-23 (.130) with two home runs and five RBIs over that stretch.
- Shoemaker threw his changeup for 40.0 percent of his overall pitches last season, the highest rate of any pitcher who threw at least 1,500 pitches, according to Statcast. He also allowed the fourth-lowest exit velocity (85.6 mph) on his changeup of anyone who induced at least 100 batted-ball events with that pitch.

## ***FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS***

### **Angels' Shoemaker, back from skull fracture, faces A's**

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Seven months to the day after he was struck in the head by a line drive, ending his 2016 season, Los Angeles Angels right-hander Matt Shoemaker will make his first start of 2017 on Tuesday night against the Oakland A's.

"I'm not thinking about it at all," Shoemaker said Monday of the incident at Seattle's Safeco Field on Sept. 4. "It's not even a thought. I just go out there and I'm pitching, which I'm very thankful for."

Shoemaker was hit on the right side of his head by Mariners third baseman Kyle Seager's liner in the second inning. He underwent emergency surgery to stop bleeding from a hematoma in his brain and to repair a small skull fracture.

"I think Matty, what he went through is something you pray no player, let alone a pitcher, will have to go through," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said before a 4-2 season-opening loss to Oakland on Monday. "When you talk about injuries, then all of a sudden you talk about life-threatening injuries, it's just a different thing.

"And it's remarkable really from Day One going out there, throwing to hitters in spring training, I think he showed early that there's no residual effect of what happened, and he's going to go out there and pitch well."

Shoemaker will wear a carbon-fiber protective insert in his cap. He said his wife, Danielle, probably "feels a little better" that he'll have added protection but didn't pressure him to wear the insert.

"She was like, 'You got a titanium plate in there, so you're probably good if it hits the same spot,'" Shoemaker said, smiling. "Hopefully it never does. ... The cool thing is she really didn't mind either way. She just said whatever you're comfortable doing."

Shoemaker went 9-13 with a 3.88 ERA last season in 27 starts but was 3-0 with a 1.80 ERA in his last three starts before his season-ending injury.

"I just want to carry off that, and now I just want to get better," said Shoemaker, who went 16-4 with a 3.04 ERA in 2014 as a rookie.

A's left-hander Sean Manaea, who made his major league debut on April 29 last season, will make his 2017 debut. Manaea went 7-9 with a 3.86 ERA as a rookie and came on strong down the stretch. He went 3-3 with a 1.05 ERA in his final six starts.

"I think I've grown a lot," Manaea said. "Last year there was a pretty steep learning curve, especially at the beginning. I didn't really know what I was doing. I was just trying to find routines and just putting everything together. Once I learned what to do and how to control everything mentally and just slowing things down and being myself, that's where I felt like I really took off. I just got to carry that into this year and build off that."

Last season, Manaea battled injuries, including a left pronator strain, but he became stronger by handling adversity in his first big-league season.

"I didn't really know what to expect," Manaea said. "The atmosphere is completely different than in the minor leagues. I felt like I was pretty ready for it, but just going through all those tough starts and the injuries, that helped me a lot, too. It wasn't good at the time, but now that we're here, I know how to deal with that kind of stuff. That definitely will help me out."

Manaea is 0-1 with a 3.55 ERA in two career starts against the Angels. Shoemaker is 4-2 with a 3.48 ERA in 10 career appearances, including nine starts, against Oakland.

## **FROM FOX SPORTS**

### **Angels' Shoemaker recalls life-altering moment after 105 mph liner fractured his skull**

By Brett Smiley

During an Angels-Mariners game in Seattle last September, Kyle Seager drilled a line drive back at Matt Shoemaker that fractured the pitcher's skull and altered his life in an instant. Shoemaker went down and the entire stadium gasped.

“Everything just went silent,” Shoemaker writes of the immediate aftermath in an essay for The Players’ Tribune

Shoemaker recalls feeling calm after the headshot but things took a turn at the hospital when doctors rushed him into the operating room for emergency brain surgery. Doctors worked to resolve internal bleeding in his brain, making incisions that left him with a large scar.

Meanwhile, the trauma and uncertainty sent shockwaves through his family. For his sake, his wife steeled her nerves before the surgery. But she opened up about it later. He writes:

As my condition improved, my wife and I talked more and more about those first few hours after the accident. She didn’t say it to me at the time, of course, or even show any hint of worry, but Danielle later admitted that during the FaceTime call right before the surgery she grabbed [their son] and put him on the screen because she was afraid that he may never see me again.

It’s a pretty chilling account and well worth a read.

The come-backer is an ever-present, horrifying threat to pitchers that seems to happen at least once a season. It’s happened to the Rays’ Alex Cobb in 2014, Pirates pitcher Ryan Vogelsong in 2016 and fellow Pirates pitcher Jameson Taillon, who actually remained in the game. It just depends where the ball connects with the pitcher’s head.

Shoemaker is back on the hill this season, like most pitchers who bravely return after similar experiences.

Humor is one good way to deal with it, none better than former A’s and now Dodgers starter Brandon McCarthy, who wrote this a few days after getting struck:

The good news in all of this, is that I set up my fantasy lineups beforehand. So there shall be no excuses at this point.

### ***FROM CBS SPORTS***

#### **Angels reliever to live in an RV after spring strikeout numbers got him on the team**

Blake Parker recorded 17 straight outs via strikeout in spring training, and now he lives in an RV

By Mike Axisa

By and large, spring training numbers are meaningless and not at all predictive. There’s too much noise. Pitchers are often working on specific things rather than trying to get outs, and so many at-bats and innings go to minor league players.

That said, every year there are spring numbers that jump out at you, and this year Angels reliever Blake Parker managed to strike out 24 batters in 12 1/3 Cactus League innings. He walked two. Furthermore, at one point he recorded 17 straight outs via strikeout.

Matt Birch @MBirchAngels

'Blake Parker's streak of 17 consecutive outs being strikeouts is longer than any regular season streak since at least 1974 (STATS LLC).'

With numbers like that, Parker had to make the team, right? Right. Parker did indeed win a spot in the Angels bullpen. He spent most of last season in Triple-A, though he did throw 17 1/3 innings with the Mariners and Yankees. Parker fanned 15 and had a 4.67 ERA (96 ERA+) in those 17 1/3 innings.

Now that he's on the big league roster, Parker will surely find a nice place to live in Anaheim, right? Well, no. He and his family are planning to live in an RV. Pedro Moura of the *Los Angeles Times* has the story:

Even if he was sent to triple-A Salt Lake instead, Parker knew where he would be sleeping: inside his new recreational vehicle. The 31-year-old journeyman reliever purchased a so-called fifth wheel last week in Phoenix, towed it to California when the Angels broke camp and kept it parked at Angel Stadium until he found out where to go. He scouted several locations across Orange County that have WiFi and pool access for his wife and stepson to enjoy.

...

"It's not like we're all in this one, little, tiny room," Parker said. "It's small, but it's big enough. It helps to be able to pack up and take all your stuff, wherever you go. And then at the end of the year, I have this fifth wheel I can go camping in for a couple weeks, take a road trip."

Parker makes his offseason home in Arkansas, so at the end of the season he and his family will pack up the RV and drive home. For now, they'll park somewhere in Southern California -- close to a WiFi signal, of course -- as Parker looks to establish himself as full-time big league reliever.