



# OAKLAND ATHLETICS

## Media Release

Oakland Athletics Baseball Company • 7000 Coliseum Way • Oakland, CA 94621  
510-638-4900 • Public Relations Facsimile 510-562-1633 • [www.oaklandathletics.com](http://www.oaklandathletics.com)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 29, 2011

### Weeks, Willingham Propel A's to 35-35 Mark After All-Star Break; Pitching Injuries, Defense Contribute to 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Finish in AL West *Gonzalez, Bailey & Balfour Lead Pitching Staff That Set Franchise Strikeout Record*

OAKLAND, Calif. – Despite a hitting awakening and positive managerial change that resulted in a .500 post All-Star Break record, the 2011 Oakland Athletics ultimately could not overcome a rash of pitching injuries and porous defense in finishing third in the American League West with a 74-88 overall mark. Bob Melvin, who assumed the reins from Bob Geren June 9, steered the A's to a 35-35 record after the break, thanks mainly to a revitalized offense that added 25 points (.233 to .258) to its team batting average in the second half.

Oakland, although saddled with its fifth consecutive non-winning season, showed significant improvement in the final half. After ranking at or near the bottom in most league offensive categories at the All-Star Break, the A's rode the hot bats of Jemile Weeks (.310, 18 doubles, 5 triples after the ASB), Josh Willingham (.251, 18 HR, 54 RBI), Cliff Pennington (.303, 16 doubles, 5 HR, 35 RBI) and Hideki Matsui (.295, 6 HR, 38 RBI) to a pronounced turnaround. After the break, the A's ranked third in walks (236), fourth in doubles (140), tied for fifth in triples (14), and sixth in batting average (.258) and runs scored (330) among AL teams.

Unfortunately, the Athletics' second-half hitting surge coincided with a pitching staff that struggled after a promising 2011 start. Anchored by All-Star lefty Gio Gonzalez (16-12, 3.12 ERA, 202 IP, 197 SO) and closer Andrew Bailey (24 of 26 saves, 3.24 ERA), the pitching staff ranked third in AL earned run average (3.71). It also set a new franchise record, dating back to 1901, with 1,160 strikeouts to break the old mark of 1,124 set in 2009. However, injuries ended the seasons of starters Dallas Braden (April 17) and Brett Anderson (June 7)—both resulting in early-season surgeries—and also forced such key pieces as relievers Bailey (53 games) and Michael Wuertz (53) and starters Rich Harden (82) and Brandon McCarthy (41) to miss considerable time on the Disabled List. In time, their absence was missed, as a staff that led the AL in ERA (3.13) before the All-Star Break saw its second-half ERA slide to 4.48.

Yet, perhaps the most disappointing aspect of the A's season was their glove work. The club committed 124 errors—the most by an Oakland team in 10 years—which was second most in the majors behind the Chicago Cubs (134). A's pitchers were guilty of 19 of the miscues, a league-high. The 124 errors led to 82 unearned runs, also most in the AL and second most in the majors, and the highest total by an A's defense since 2000 (83).

While finishing 22 games behind Texas in the AL West standings falls far below pre-season expectations, the A's can still find solace in certain aspects of the 2011 season. Twenty-five of their 88 losses were decided by only one-run—their most one-run setbacks since 1987—which might indicate Oakland is not that far away from being a contender next season. Additionally, there were many individual player accomplishments this year.

Offensively, Weeks (.303, 8 triples, 50 runs, 22 SB in 97 games), Willingham (.246, 29 HR, 98 RBI), Matsui (.251, 28 doubles, 12 HR, 72 RBI), Pennington (.264, 26 doubles, 8 HR, 58 RBI, 14 SB) and Coco Crisp (.264, 27 doubles, 5 triples, 8 HR, 54 RBI, 49 SB) all enjoyed productive seasons.

Weeks, one of the American League's leading Rookie of the Year candidates despite not joining the team until June 7, paced the A's in batting average, triples, multiple-hit games (35) and games of three hits or more (14). His .303 average ranks second best in Oakland history for a rookie (Mitchell Page, .307 in 1977) and would rank tied for 10th among all AL leaders if he had enough at-bats to qualify. Remarkably, Weeks batted .395 (32-for-81) with seven doubles, one triple and 32 RBI with runners in scoring position, a figure that would have led the majors if he had qualified (V. Martinez, DET, .394).

Willingham enjoyed perhaps his best season as a major leaguer in 2011, posting career bests in both home runs and RBI. His RBI total is the highest by an A's team leader since Frank Thomas had 114 in 2006. The A's left fielder finished the season with a flourish, ranking tied for fourth in the AL in home runs and sixth in RBI after the All-Star Break. Matsui was another second-half standout, batting .295 after the break after managing only a .209 average prior to the Midsummer Classic. He started the final half with a bang when he lined a sixth-inning solo shot off Duane Below in Detroit July 20, becoming the first person in baseball history to hit a combined 500 home runs between the Japanese Leagues and MLB. Pennington excelled in the clutch this season, batting .348 (40-for-115) with runners in scoring position to rank seventh best in the AL.

Beyond his brilliant catches in center field, Crisp gave the A's one of their more well-rounded offensive players. He ranked first on the team in hits (140) and stolen bases (career-high 49), second in doubles and triples, tied for second in batting average (minimum: 400 AB), and fourth in RBI. Successful in each of his final 23 stolen base attempts since the All-Star Break, Crisp finished the year tied with the Yankees' Brett Gardner for the AL stolen base title.

While injuries impacted Oakland's pitching this year, there were still high points for the staff. Gonzalez ranked tied for fourth in victories, ninth in strikeouts and 10th in ERA among AL leaders, while Brandon McCarthy went 8-4 with a 3.15 ERA after the All-Star Break to finish 9-9 with a 3.32 ERA (13th, AL). Guillermo Moscoso, a non-drafted free agent acquired in the offseason, carved out an 8-10 record and 3.38 ERA in 21 starts. And Trevor Cahill blazed to a 6-0 start, then had to settle for a 12-14 mark and 4.16 ERA in a team-high 34 starts and 207.2 innings. The young duo of the 26-year-old Gonzalez (31) and 23-year-old Cahill (30) enter 2012 with a combined 61 wins over the past two seasons, ranking fourth (tied) and eighth, respectively, in the American League during that period.

Bailey, who was not activated until May 29 due to a strained right forearm, continued to be a lights-out closer this season. His .923 save percentage ranked second-best in the American League and was the fourth-best single season mark in Oakland history. He converted all 16 of his save opportunities after the All-Star Break and is now a perfect 39-for-39 in

save chances in his career following the break. Balfour also shined as the A's primary set-up man this season, posting a 5-2 mark and 2.47 ERA in 62 appearances, holding opponents to a team-best .199 batting average.

## 2011 Team Notes

- The A's finished the 2011 season with a 74-88 record, which was their worst mark since 1998 when they were also 74-88...it marked the fifth consecutive season the A's finished without a winning record, which is the third longest streak in Oakland history...had six consecutive seasons with a .500 record or lower from 1982-87 and 1993-98...the only other teams without a winning record over the last five years are Baltimore, Kansas City, Pittsburgh and Washington...finished in third place in the American League West, 22 games behind Texas.
- The A's spent one day in first place in 2011 and that was on May 17 when they were tied with Texas with a 22-20 record...then lost 17 of their next 22 games, including a 10-game losing streak from May 30-June 9...**Bob Geren** was replaced by **Bob Melvin** as manager June 9 and the A's went 47-52 under Melvin after going 27-36 with Geren at the helm.
- The A's pitching staff compiled a 3.71 ERA, which ranked third in the American League...set an Athletics franchise record with 1160 strikeouts, breaking the previous mark of 1124 set in 2009...led the AL in fewest home runs (136) and lowest opponents slugging percentage (.378)...also ranked third in pickoffs (20), fourth in opponents batting average (.250), fifth in most walks (519) and sixth in strikeouts and opponents on-base percentage (.317)...the A's now have a 3.95 ERA since 2000, which is the best mark by an AL team over that span and third lowest in the majors behind the Braves (3.86) and Dodgers (3.89).
- A's starting pitchers were 59-63 with a 3.70 ERA, which ranked fourth in the American League...led the AL in fewest home runs (96) and lowest opponents slugging percentage (.381)...also ranked fourth in opponents batting average (.252) and most walks (330), fifth in strikeouts (758) and seventh in opponents on-base percentage (.315).
- The A's bullpen ranked eighth in the American League with a 3.74 ERA...had 39 saves, which tied for fourth...had the fewest wins (15) and ranked fifth in most losses (25)...the 15 wins were the fewest by the A's bullpen since 1990 (14)...allowed 33.7% of inherited runners to score, which was the fourth highest percentage in the AL...were third in first batter strikeouts (101).
- The A's batted .244 with a .311 on-base percentage and .369 slugging percentage, all of which ranked third lowest in the American League...also had the third fewest runs scored (645) and the third fewest home runs (114)...the home runs were sixth fewest in Oakland history in a non-strike season...averaged 3.98 runs per game, which was sixth lowest in Oakland history and the lowest since the 1979 club averaged 3.54...the on-base percentage is seventh lowest in Oakland history and the lowest since 1982 (.309)...the batting average is also seventh lowest and the slugging percentage was ninth lowest...walked just 509 times, which was the fewest by an A's team in a non-strike season since 1985 (508)...were shutout 15 times, which tied for second most in the AL...it is also third most in Oakland history and is the most since the 1979 club was blanked 17 times.
- The A's committed 124 errors, which were the most in the American League and second most in the majors to the Cubs (134)...it marked the first time the A's led the AL in errors since 1998...the 124 errors were the A's most since making 125 in 2001...the errors led to 82 unearned runs, which were the most in the AL, second most in the majors and the most by an A's team since 2000 (83)...had 1528 assists, which was second fewest in Oakland history in a non-strike season...had 1508 in 1984...19 of the errors were committed by pitchers, which led the AL and tied for third most in Oakland history.
- The A's were 39-53 at the All-Star Break and went 35-35 after the break...had a 3.13 ERA at the break, which was the lowest in the American League, but posted a 4.48 ERA after the break, which ranked eighth...hit .233 before the break, which was second lowest in the AL, but then batted .258 after the break, which was sixth best...averaged 3.42 runs per game before the break and 4.71 after the break...hit 50 home runs in 92 games before the break and 64 in 70 after the break...were hitting .239 with runners in scoring position at the break but then hit .298 with RISP after the break.
- The A's compiled a 43-38 record in Oakland compared to 31-50 on the road...had the eighth best home record in the American League and tied for the fourth worst road record...had a winning record at home for the second consecutive season but posted a losing record on the road for the fifth year in a row...the road record was seventh worst in Oakland history and the worst since 1997 when they went 30-51...posted a 3.18 ERA at home and a 4.26 ERA on the road...had the third lowest home ERA in the AL and the fifth highest road ERA...hit .249 in Oakland compared to .239 on the road...the road batting average was the lowest in the AL, third lowest in the majors and second lowest in Oakland history (.230 in 1968).
- The A's used the disabled list 15 times, which is their fewest in a season since 2006 when they also used it 15 times...used the DL a total of 87 times from 2007-10...the 15 players combined to miss 706 games, an average of 47.1 games per stint.
- **Andrew Bailey** converted 24 of 26 (92.3%) save opportunities, which was the second best percentage in the American League and the fourth best single season mark in Oakland history...is 75 for 84 (89.3%) in his career, which is the best mark in Oakland history...is one of three pitchers in Major League history with at least 20 saves in each of his first three seasons along with Kazuhiro Sasaki (2000-02) and Billy Koch (1999-2001).
- **Trevor Cahill** won 12 games after winning 18 a year ago and 10 in his first season in 2009...he is the just the second pitcher in Oakland history (Tim Hudson, 1999-2001) and sixth in franchise history (Jim Nash, 1966-68; Lefty Grove, 1925-27; Chief Bender, 1903-05 and Eddie Plank, 1901-03) to win at least 10 games in each of the first three seasons of his career...his 40 career wins are second most in Oakland history by a pitcher before his 24<sup>th</sup> birthday (42, Vida Blue).
- **Coco Crisp** stole a career-high 49 bases, which tied for the American League lead...is the first Athletic to lead the league in steals since Rickey Henderson had 66 in 1998...is the 10<sup>th</sup> player (26<sup>th</sup> time) in Oakland history to steal 40 bases in a season...in addition to steals, he also led the A's in hits (140) and tied for the team lead in runs (69).
- **Gio Gonzalez** led the A's in wins (16), strikeouts (197) and ERA (3.12)...tied for fourth in the American League in wins, ranked ninth in strikeouts and was 10<sup>th</sup> in ERA but also issued a league-leading 91 walks...his strikeout total was fifth best in Oakland history and he averaged 8.78 strikeouts per nine innings, which was second best in Athletics history...won 15 games last year and is the first A's pitcher to win 15 games in back-to-back seasons since Mark Mulder won 17 games in 2004 and 15 in 2003...is now 31-21 with a 3.17 ERA over the last two seasons...the wins are tied for fourth in the AL over that span, the ERA is ninth best (min. 250 ip) and he also ranks 10<sup>th</sup> in strikeouts (368).
- **Brandon McCarthy** ranked second in the American League in strikeout to walk ratio (4.92), tied for second in complete games (5), third in fewest walks per nine innings (1.32), fewest home runs per nine innings (0.58) and fewest pitches per inning (14.6) and ninth in on-base percentage (.281)...set an Athletics franchise record for strikeout to walk ratio, breaking the previous mark of 3.91 set by Dan Haren in 2006...his walks per nine innings were second best to the record of 1.30 by Catfish Hunter in 1974...went 8-4 with a 3.15 ERA in 14 starts after the All-Star Break after going 1-5 with a 3.54 ERA in 11 starts before the break...tied for third in the AL in wins after the break.
- **Ryan Sweeney** did not commit an error in 92 games in the outfield...he has a 209-game errorless streak, which is an Oakland record for an outfielder.
- **Jemile Weeks** led American League rookies in triples (8), tied for second in stolen bases (22), ranked third in hits (123), doubles (26) and multiple hit games (35), fourth in total bases (171) and fifth in runs (50) and extra base hits (36)...his .303 batting average was the best among AL rookies with 400 or more plate appearances and was second best in Oakland history to Mitchell Page, who hit .307 in 1977...his eight triples tied for sixth best in Oakland history and matched the second best total by an Oakland rookie.
- **Josh Willingham** led the A's and established new career highs with 29 home runs and 98 RBI...the home runs were the second best total by an Athletic over the last five years (Jack Cust, 33 in 2008)...his RBI were the most by an Athletic since Frank Thomas had 114 in 2006...also led the team with a career-high 150 strikeouts and tied for team lead in runs (69) and walks (56).

