

Oakland A's make quick work of Seattle Mariners: Vin Mazzaro is sent to Triple-A Sacramento River Cats

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

All intrigue involving the A's on Monday transpired before they even took the field against the Seattle Mariners.

Starting pitcher Vin Mazzaro was optioned to Triple-A Sacramento, a surprising move considering major league teams typically add players to their rosters in September, not subtract them.

The game itself provided far less drama.

Left-hander Brett Anderson returned to familiar form and the Mariners offered little resistance in a 6-2 A's victory at the Oakland Coliseum. Anderson (4-6) allowed four hits over 7²/₃ innings in a game that wrapped in 2 hours, 19 minutes.

The A's expect that kind of performance from Anderson, who was signed to a four-year extension in April but has endured two lengthy stints on the DL.

It's clear the A's also expected more from Mazzaro, who turns 24 on Sept. 27.

Mazzaro was 6-8 with a 4.29 ERA in 21 games (18 starts) but posted a 5.60 ERA over his last eight outings.

"He's just been inconsistent," assistant general manager David Forst said. "He's had very good games where his stuff's been good and he's pitched from ahead (in the count). Of late, he's let the offense dictate how he pitches."

Yet, the timing of the move is curious. The A's moved within seven games of first-place Texas, which has lost four in a row and could be without MVP candidate Josh Hamilton for an extended period because of injury.

The A's still face a daunting task to overtake the Rangers in the American League West, but for a team building a foundation on young starting pitching, the final 25 games would seem ideal for Mazzaro to continue taking the mound in an effort to work through his struggles.

"We need (Mazzaro) to go somewhere and continue to pitch, while we need the best option up here to try to win as many games as we can," Forst said. "... If this move is really going to be about Vinny working things out as a starter, it was going to have to be in the minor leagues."

He'll likely get that chance in Sacramento, where the River Cats host Tacoma (Mariners) in the first round of the Pacific Coast League playoffs beginning Wednesday.

Mazzaro declined to address reporters as he left the Coliseum.

Manager Bob Geren said long reliever Boof Bonser is one option to take Mazzaro's rotation spot. Forst added that the A's could pluck somebody from Sacramento's rotation. Clayton Mortensen could be a candidate, though he's scheduled to start Game 1 for the River Cats.

Anderson hadn't won since Aug. 4, going 0-4 over five starts, but he had allowed just 10 earned runs total over that span.

Unlike his previous two starts, Anderson avoided early trouble Monday. Starting with a 4-6-3 double play in the second, he retired 13 consecutive batters.

His only run allowed came on Franklin Gutierrez's homer in the seventh.

"I was a little rusty early," Anderson said. "But in the middle innings I started hitting my spots and getting some early contact."

The A's took control quickly as Coco Crisp homered to lead off the bottom of the first against Jason Vargas (9-9). Daric Barton followed with a triple off the right field wall and scored on Kurt Suzuki's ground out.

Oakland A's update: Matt Carson makes the most out of a chance to play

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Matt Carson's opportunities have been few, and he admitted it's been a tough adjustment being a part-time player.

Drawing a start in right field Monday, Carson contributed in multiple ways to the A's 6-2 win over the Seattle Mariners.

He made a diving catch in foul territory in the top of the first, crashing into the wall as he hauled in Chone Figgins' fly ball.

He added another nice catch on the run in the top of the fourth. Then in the bottom of the fourth, Carson lined a homer to left-center off Jason Vargas to snap an 0-for-8 streak since he was recalled from the minors Aug. 24.

Dating back to his previous stint in the majors, Carson was on an 0-for-15 skid with Oakland.

Carson was a regular in Triple-A Sacramento's lineup but he's seen minimal time over four stints with the big club this season.

"You know what? I needed a day like this," Carson said. "Not only to feel like a part of the team, but for my psyche in general."

A's starting pitcher Brett Anderson was especially impressed with Carson's play in foul territory.

"I was looking for a new ball," Anderson said. "I thought it was going to be out of play or land in foul territory. Next thing I know, he's diving in the dirt and catching it."

Third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff was out of the lineup after lower back spasms forced him from Sunday's game. He wasn't sure when he might return.

"I could wake up tomorrow and it could feel good, or it could take a few days," he said.

Kouzmanoff has missed time with back problems each of the last two seasons, but he said the current problem just cropped up Sunday.

"It's better when I keep moving," he said. "As soon as I stop in one position, it locks up."

Steve Tolleson played third Monday, and manager Bob Geren said he'd platoon the left-handed hitting Jeff Larish with Tolleson until Kouzmanoff returns.

Daric Barton is hitting .343 (24 for 70) with 23 walks over his past 22 games. ... Coco Crisp's leadoff homer was the third of his career and his first since Aug. 18, 2003, while he was with Cleveland.

Chin Music: A's send Vin Mazzaro to Triple-A Sacramento

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 9/6/2010 12:47PM

The A's dropped a bit of a shocker before today's game against Seattle, demoting right-hander Vin Mazzaro to Triple-A Sacramento in light of his recent struggles. The move definitely caught me by surprise because, A) Rarely do we see a player sent down after rosters expand. Usually players are being added, not subtracted. And B) With the A's seemingly out of the hunt in the AL West, it seems these final weeks should be all about evaluating young players such as Mazzaro at the major league level. Just had a phone conversation with A's assistant GM David Forst, and he stressed this move isn't about sending any kind of message or wake-up call to Mazzaro. He also said Mazzaro remains very much in the team's future plans. "He's just been inconsistent," Forst said. "He's had very good games where his stuff has been good and he's pitched from ahead (in the count). Of late, he's let the offense dictate how he pitches. We know he has talent and ability."

Here's a look at Mazzaro's outing-by-outing results this season. Manager Bob Geren said the team would consider all options to fill Mazzaro's spot in the rotation. He mentioned Boof Bonser as one option from the current roster, but added the team could promote a starter from the minors or skip Mazzaro's next turn because of Thursday's day off. Forst indicated that the team would definitely consider promoting a pitcher from Sacramento even though the River Cats will be starting the playoffs soon. Clayton Mortensen has pitched solidly for Sacramento all season and he's got some big league starts under his belt. Consider him one option ...

Still a shocker to me, even though Geren has been frank in his disappointment with Mazzaro's past two starts. Until recently, Mazzaro's development had been a major bright spot for the A's.

Mazzaro declined to address reporters as he was leaving the Coliseum today. He was 6-8 with a 4.29 ERA in 21 games (18 starts) with Oakland.

Today's lineups:

A's — Crisp CF, BArton 1B, Suzuki C, Cust DH, Ellis 2B, Davis LF, Carson RF, Tolleson 3B, Pennington SS; Anderson LHP.

Mariners — Ichiro RF, Figgins 2B, Gutierrez CF, Branyan DH, Lopez 3B, Kotchman 1B, Moore C, Saunders LF, Wilson SS; Vargas LHP.

A's power past Mariners, inch closer to Rangers

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Oakland is stubbornly sticking around the .500 mark and somewhat within striking range of the Rangers.

With a 6-2 victory over the last-place Mariners on Monday, the A's inched back to seven games behind Texas in the AL West.

They're consistent: Since June 25, Oakland has been between seven and 10 games back, no more, no less. Since the All-Star break, the A's have not been more than three games over or three games under .500.

Oakland did do something unusual Monday. The A's got their first leadoff homer of the season when Coco Crisp hit one over the fence in left-center off Jason Vargas. The A's offense, not known for its power, also got a solo shot from part-time player Matt Carson in the fourth. The team has hit 15 homers in the past 14 games.

Crisp and Carson both made fine defensive plays, too, and Carson's play in the first inning was so good, Oakland starter Brett Anderson didn't even realize the right fielder had made it. Chone Figgins hit a flyball down the line that tailed toward foul ground, and Carson raced across the line, slid and came up with the ball before thudding into the side wall.

"I was looking for a new ball," Anderson said. "I thought it was out of play. The next thing I knew, he was diving in the dirt and caught it."

Carson also made a nice running grab on a drive by Russell Branyan in the fourth. Carson's home run snapped an 0-for-15 streak.

"I needed a day like this one, I sure did," Carson said. "I've been struggling every since I got called back up. I needed this not only to feel like I'm part of the team but for my psyche in general."

Anderson snapped a four-decision losing streak, and he allowed only four hits and one run (a homer by Franklin Gutierrez) in 7 2/3 innings.

The left-hander didn't walk a man, and he was helped with a strikeout-caught stealing (Ichiro Suzuki) double play in the first and a 4-6-3 double play in the second that helped get him out of a two-on, none-out situation. Anderson has a 2.78 ERA over his past six starts.

Third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff, who left Sunday's game with back spasms, remained out Monday and it's possible he'll miss two or three more games. Steve Tolleson played third Monday.

A's Beat: Vin Mazzaro sent to Triple-A

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Seldom are players demoted in September - rosters have expanded, so such a move looks like a slap in the face.

When the A's sent down right-hander **Vin Mazzaro** on Monday, it was for two reasons, according to assistant general manager **David Forst**: The team wants to win as many games as possible and needs consistent pitching to do so, and Oakland wants Mazzaro to keep working on what he needs to do to *be* a more consistent pitcher.

The A's could have stashed Mazzaro in the bullpen for a start or two, or skipped his turn once, especially considering that a blister has affected him recently. Forst said that working in the bullpen "doesn't do anything for Vin. He needs to work every five days."

Asked if there was any other aspect to the demotion, such as a disciplinary action, Forst said, "Absolutely not." Manager **Bob Geren** called the decision strictly performance-related.

Mazzaro has lost his past six decisions, though in five of his past seven starts, he gave up no more than three runs. In his past two starts he allowed 14 runs, 12 earned, and he often worked behind in the count.

He declined to answer questions as he was walking to his car Monday.

The last A's pitcher to be demoted in September was reliever **Justin Lehr** in 2004; he was traded to Milwaukee that winter.

Triple-A Sacramento begins a playoff series with Tacoma on Wednesday, and though the A's have not said so, it's reasonable to assume Mazzaro would rejoin Oakland when the River Cats' season is over.

Boof Bonser, who has pitched well in long relief, would be the option on the current roster for a start. The A's would not need a fifth starter until Tuesday at Kansas City if they choose to skip the spot this week.

Sacramento's top starter, **Clayton Mortensen**, was away from the team for personal reasons last week but he's scheduled to pitch Wednesday against Tacoma. Mazzaro's turn in Oakland would have been Friday, and that's **Bobby Cramer**'s spot for the River Cats. Since signing out of the Mexican League, Cramer, a left-hander, has a 1.94 ERA in seven starts for Sacramento.

A's leading off

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

Fun under the sun: The A's played on Labor Day for the first time in three years, but the game drew only 11,581 fans, even in gorgeous weather. The A's have won 15 of their past 20 day games and are 32-15 for the season.

Drumbeat: Mazzaro sent down in unusual move; Kouzmanoff still out

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 9/6/2010 12:41PM

Vin Mazzaro's command has been off lately, highlighted by the 3-0 homers he's allowed, and today, in a very unexpected move, the A's sent the right-handed starter to Triple-A Sacramento. Manager Bob Geren said that Mazzaro needs to throw strikes more consistently, and while that's tough to argue, it's rare once rosters expand to send out a promising youngster who has been with the team much of the season.

The A's could have chosen to skip Mazzaro's spot, especially with a day off Thursday, or they could have thrown Boof Bonser in for a start and have Mazzaro work on the side. He's had a blister that's affected his command, catcher Landon Powell mentioned last night, so maybe just a bit of a breather, especially this time of year, might have worked. One scout I spoke to after the move was made, and who was here for last night's game, said it looks to him as if Mazzaro "has hit a little bit of a wall."

Oakland, however, wants Mazzaro to stay on a five-day starting schedule; they just don't want him to do it here when he's pitching poorly. So this could be a sign that the team really does feel that they're still in the AL West race, or it could be a strong message to all of the A's pitchers that they better throw strikes, or else.

(One of the Mariners' media members cracked that Seattle wouldn't have any pitchers on the roster if they'd taken the same stance. And looking at it that way, the A's could have considered sending out Gio Gonzalez and Trevor Cahill, too - they both struggled with their command recently.)

I asked assistant general manager David Forst if the move was to send a more general message to the staff and he said, "If it does, it does, but it certainly wasn't designed to do that."

Forst stressed that the decision was made because the team wants to win as many games as possible, and they want the most consistent pitching possible. They also want Mazzaro to continue working on what he needs to do.

Mazzaro clearly was upset with the decision, but he declined to answer questions. "I really have no comment," he said while walking to his car. "What are you going to do?"

He confirmed that the team emphasized that he needs to throw more strikes. "Basically," he said. Mazzaro allowed 14 runs, 12 earned, his past two starts, and he was working behind in the count much of the time in those games.

It's unusual, no doubt about it. The last time the A's optioned out a player in September was in 2004, and it was another pitcher who was struggling, Justin Lehr. But Lehr was 26 and a reliever. Mazzaro is 23 and he's been in the rotation much of the way.

Oakland traded Lehr after that season and he hasn't really blossomed since. I hope this September demotion works out better.

Bonser is a possibility for the spot, and the team could skip it this week and then decide. They don't need a fifth starter until Tuesday at Kansas City. Clayton Mortensen, Sacramento's best starter all year, was away from the team last week for personal reasons but I'm told he'd be an option if the A's needed him.

Here's the lineup: Crisp CF, Barton 1B, Suzuki C, Cust DH, Ellis 2B, Davis LF, Carson RF, Tolleson 3B, Pennington SS

Kevin Kouzmanoff remains out with back spasms and it could be several days before he's back. They're calling him day-to-day but considering that there's a day off Thursday and Geren mentioned that Steve Tolleson and Jeff Larish will platoon at third with Kouzmanoff out, it's probably a good bet to be several days.

Anderson dominates as A's roll over Mariners

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Brett Anderson has been the author of several masterful performances this season, albeit one limited by injury.

But in those outings, the A's offense hasn't exactly represented an award-worthy supporting cast.

On Monday, looking to hand Anderson a holiday gift, they made up for it in a big way -- pounding out six runs against the visiting Mariners in a 6-2 victory, marking the club's third win in its last four games and moving it to seven games back of division-leading Texas.

The win was Anderson's first since Aug. 4, a time span in which he was tagged with a career-high-tying four consecutive losses. A fifth wasn't in the cards, though. Rather, a one-run display in seven-plus innings proved to be the winning recipe.

"He was great," batterymate Kurt Suzuki said. "He was throwing his slider for strikes and throwing it out of the zone when he needed to, and I think that thing's always going to be there. The other thing that was more impressive was his changeup. He was working his changeup, and that's a big pitch for him. He just started throwing it, and for it to be doing what it's doing now is pretty amazing. It's a good pitch for him to have, and he'll tell you that it's a big pitch for him to be successful."

It was the same pitch that afforded Anderson the opportunity to escape an eventful second, which began with Russell Branyan on board after being hit by a pitch. A Jose Lopez single moved Branyan to second, at which point Anderson buckled down and induced a double-play ground ball before striking out Adam Moore to end the Mariners' threat.

"He had a good changeup when he needed it," A's manager Bob Geren said. "He also had a good slider, but that's pretty normal for him. His fastball command was pretty good, too -- and it looked like he was able to command it real well on the outside corner."

"We know what he can do," Seattle interim manager Daren Brown said. "He has shown before what he can do. I thought he commanded the fastball pretty good, the slider, changeup at times, put a few curveballs in there. Overall, we didn't do much against him."

About the only thing they did do was collect a solo homer from Franklin Gutierrez in the seventh, but the A's had already plated five runs at that point after entering the game having lent Anderson an average of 2.66 runs of support this season.

Coco Crisp collected the A's first leadoff home run of the year in the form of a solo shot to left-center off Seattle lefty Jason Vargas to kick off the first, an inning which also witnessed Daric Barton triple and score on an RBI groundout from Suzuki.

"You really don't expect Coco Crisp to hit one out of the yard on a fastball that was up, but it was away," Vargas said. "You don't expect him to drive that pitch out of the yard. I mean, I can't chalk that up to anything except bad luck."

Luck or not, Crisp and Co. will gladly take it, especially on a team that has tallied the Majors' second fewest long balls on the year (88).

"It's good to get on the board first, it always is," Crisp said. "You want to score some way or another, and I was able to get a hold of a pitch and get us started."

Crisp's homer punctuated an all-around first-inning effort by the A's, who watched Matt Carson dive past the right field foul line toward the wall to make a brilliant catch to put an end to Chone Figgins' at-bat. The play marked the beginning of a rather special day for Carson, who also tallied a fourth-inning home run.

The A's have now busted out a combined 15 homers over the last 14 games after hitting seven over the previous 26 contests. Both Carson and Geren agreed they'd likely prefer to see a catch of that caliber rather than a home run on almost any day.

"The catch, I take more pride in that a little bit more than the home run because when I get in there, swinging the bat -- yeah, that's always nice -- but I kind of pride myself on my defense," Carson said. "So that was a good feeling, but definitely squaring the ball up, it's been a while, so that felt pretty good."

"I needed a day like this, I sure did. I've been struggling ever since I got called back up and to get a chance to do something like this today, I definitely needed it. Not only to contribute to the team and feel like I'm part of the team, but for my psyche as well."

"It's a tough one between the catch and the homer," Geren said. "But you don't see too many catches like that, so I'd have to take that."

Carson's homer was followed by an RBI single from Crisp off Vargas, who managed to surrender another run in the fifth -- thanks to a pair of sacrifice fly balls that scored Jack Cust. The Mariners hurler ultimately gave up five runs on seven hits and two walks with two strikeouts in 4 1/3 innings.

Anderson, meanwhile, cruised into the eighth, where he left to a standing ovation after tossing a season-high 7 2/3 innings en route to improving to 4-6 on the season. Furthermore, in four starts against Seattle, he's 2-1 with a 0.68 ERA.

"I thought it went pretty good," Anderson said. "They made early contact and kind of got my pitch count up, but I was able to settle down and make my pitches after that."

From the dugout, the A's lefty watched Figgins score on a sacrifice fly in the ninth to account for Seattle's final run. But it wasn't enough to keep Oakland from notching its third win in four games -- numbers that have allowed them to pick up three games on Texas, losers of four straight.

"Knowing that Texas lost today, I think it was in the back of the minds of the guys a little bit," Carson said. "But it's more just playing our game and letting the chips fall where they may."

"We played well the first two games of the homestand," Anderson said. "We had a rough one yesterday but today was a good start to the series. We've played well here at home, so if we can continue to close that gap, who knows what can happen?"

Back spasms sideline Kouzmanoff

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- For Kevin Kouzmanoff, back issues have been a problem ever since he fell down the dugout steps trying to catch a foul ball in an Arizona Fall League game in 2004.

In Sunday's 7-4 loss to the Angels, Kouzmanoff suffered his latest setback, experiencing lower back spasms as he ran down to first base on a fifth-inning single. Kouzmanoff was out of the starting lineup on Monday and Oakland manager Bob Geren pronounced his third baseman to be day-to-day.

"I'm a little sore," Kouzmanoff said. "We're just treating it, icing it and just continuing to work on it. I could wake up tomorrow and I could feel great or I could be sore. It's unlikely that I'll play [on Tuesday], but you never know."

Kouzmanoff said he usually experiences spasms in his lower back about once a year, but that it hadn't been a problem this season until Sunday. Kouzmanoff said his back issues have never sent him to the disabled list and that he usually misses a few days at a time. He missed five games with a strained lower back in 2007 and six more in 2008.

"It's just from the twisting and torquing and swinging the bat every day, the grind," Kouzmanoff said. "It's just something I've got to maintain. I have a back strengthening program that I do, and I've been feeling great up until this point."

Steve Tolleson started at third base, batting eighth, on Monday. Geren said he would likely platoon Tolleson with Jeff Larish at the hot corner for the time being. Tolleson is batting .261 (6-for-23) and Larish is batting .216 (8-for-37) with two home runs and eight RBIs for Oakland this season.

Kouzmanoff has emerged as the team's top power threat this season, leading the A's with 14 home runs and 69 RBIs this season. He has hit four home runs and driven in eight runs over his past 10 games.

"He's been swinging the bat pretty well the last week, 10 days," Geren said. "Big home runs on the road trip, driving some runs in. So there will be a little bit of a void there, but sometimes a guy can come in and fill in and do a nice job."

Mazzaro optioned to Sacramento

OAKLAND -- Following a six-week winless stretch, A's right-handed starter Vin Mazzaro was optioned to Triple-A Sacramento in a surprising move on Monday morning.

Mazzaro, defeated in Sunday's 7-4 loss to the visiting Angels, has endured a rather rough second half. This downturn followed an initial stretch where he went 5-2 with a 2.84 ERA while yielding a .226 opponents' batting average over his first nine starts after being promoted on June 8 to replace the injured Brett Anderson.

The 23-year-old righty declined to talk to the media on Monday, and manager Bob Geren kept his words to a minimum, only going so far as saying he'd like to see "consistent strikes" from the fifth-starter spot.

"The fifth spot needs to be as consistent as the other four," Geren said.

Mazzaro is 0-6 with a 5.60 ERA and a .284 opponents' batting average in his past eight starts, four of them quality starts that brought about six runs in a combined 25 1/3 innings but limited run support. Three of them, though, saw Mazzaro surrender five runs or more in less than six innings -- much of which can be attributed to his command struggles.

"He doesn't pitch ahead in the count, and he kind of lets the hitter dictate what he's doing," A's assistant general manager David Forst said. "He just didn't have the same command he did earlier in the year. His stuff was good, he got ahead, he was able to use his slider to put hitters away. Just recently, he's had a lot of 2-1, 3-1 counts, and he can't pitch from behind like that."

The transaction, Forst confirmed, was specifically meant to aid all involved -- Mazzaro included.

"More than anything, it was about his struggles over the last six weeks," he said. "The move was designed to give him the work that he needs and, at the same time, give us the best chance to win every five days. Those guys are out there doing what they can to win as many games as possible.

"Vin just hasn't pitched well his past few times out, and it wasn't going to make sense to send him to the bullpen. He wouldn't get much work there, so the best thing was for him to pitch every five days in the Minor Leagues and try to get some of that consistency and command back."

In Mazzaro's stead, both Geren and Forst said the club is considering a handful of options, including skipping the next fifth spot thanks to Thursday's off-day. Reliever Boof Bonser is also a possibility, as is calling up a Minor Leaguer.

In five games with the A's since his promotion on July 31, Bonser has a 3.29 ERA, allowing five runs on 17 hits and two walks with nine strikeouts in 13 2/3 innings. After making 60 starts with the Twins over the first three years of his Major League career, Bonser insisted on Monday that he would be more than up to the challenge of sliding into the rotation.

"I definitely would," he said. "Obviously, that's what I've been doing. When I was in the Minor Leagues, I just happened to go into the bullpen. But I would love the opportunity to start again."

Given September's expanded roster, a corresponding move was not made. Geren said Mazzaro will have the opportunity to see playoff action with Triple-A Sacramento, which clinched its ninth division title in the last 11 seasons last week.

Davis sets new personal SB mark

OAKLAND -- With some of the fastest feet in baseball, it's no wonder why the A's Spanish broadcast team calls Rajai Davis, "La Centella" or "Flash." On Sunday, La Centella picked up his 42nd stolen base of the year to set a new career high.

"It's always a goal to be better than you were the previous year," Davis said. "I think I'm getting better dealing with adversity and overcoming the challenges that I've had. I'm getting better and becoming a better Major League player."

Davis has 15 stolen bases since the All-Star break, accounting for more than a quarter of Oakland's Major League-best 59 stolen bases since the Midsummer Classic. Fellow outfielder Coco Crisp has also been a nightmare for the opposition on the basepaths, as he has converted 15 straight stolen base attempts.

But Davis has also set a new career high with five home runs this season, up from his previous high of three. Davis attributes some of his home run hitting success to using a new bat -- one created by Eric Chavez's bat company, Diego Bats.

"I changed just before I started hitting home runs," Davis said. "I hit a grand slam with it."

Davis hit a grand slam against the Angels on July 10 and has hit two home runs since. Davis is one of two A's to use a Diego bat. Mark Ellis also uses one. While Davis' bats are emblazoned with a personal "RD11" signature, Ellis' bats read "E Dawg".

Davis said he was using a Diego bat during Spring Training, but switched back to a traditional ash bat once the season started.

"I came back [to a maple Diego bat]," Davis said. "It felt harder, like it was harder wood. I had a Louisville [Slugger], but the wood wasn't as good. It flakes, but I don't get [any] of that flaking here. It's solid."

Brnayan's power key vs. Athletics

By Doug Miller / MLB.com

The Mariners have been looking for offense in a big way this year, and they've been getting it from a familiar source of late. Meanwhile, the A's are making the most of their third-base situation with their regular guy a bit banged up.

That's the story when the two American League West teams go at each other on Tuesday night in the second of a three-game series in Oakland.

For the Mariners, first baseman Russell Brnayan has been every bit the beast of a long-ball threat that he was for them last year before he signed with Cleveland in the offseason.

Since being re-acquired from the Indians on June 26, Brnayan has hit 13 home runs in the 43 games he's played -- more than anyone else on the team has hit all year -- and ranks second in franchise history in home runs per at-bat with a minimum of 700 plate appearances.

Brnayan has hit 44 home runs in 164 games with Seattle over the past two seasons, one every 13.66 at-bats. Only Ken Phelps (13.32) hit home runs more often than Brnayan has. Ken Griffey Jr. is third on the list with a home run every 15.15 at-bats.

For the A's, with regular third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff listed as day-to-day with lower back pain, manager Bob Geren said he'll likely platoon Jeff Larish and Steve Tolleson at third base, giving Oakland yet another look in a season in which they've explored various combinations in the infield.

"Kouz had been swinging the bat well the last 10 days, so there's a little void," Geren said. "But that's a situation where a guy has a chance to fill in and do a nice job."

Mariners: Fister looking for consistency

Righty Doug Fister, who starts Tuesday's game, had an uneven outing in his last start. On Sept. 2 vs. Cleveland in Seattle, he allowed only one hit in his first five innings and retired 14 batters in a row. But he gave up four runs in the sixth to erase a 3-0 lead. He's 3-1, with a 1.50 ERA in five career starts vs. the A's, including a 2-1 record and 1.50 ERA in three starts against Oakland this season. ... The Mariners' Triple-A Tacoma affiliate and Class A Clinton club both clinched playoff spots yesterday. That means eight of the Mariners' nine Minor League affiliates, including the Dominican and Venezuelan Mariners, have advanced to the postseason this year.

A's: Braden continues to impress

Tuesday's starter Dallas Braden is tied for the American League lead in shutouts (two), tied for third in complete games (three), ranks fourth in fewest walks per nine innings (1.73), and is ninth in ERA (3.23). He's 5-3 with a 2.32 ERA in nine starts since being reinstated from the disabled list on July 20. He's 2-1 with a 4.05 ERA in six career appearances (five starts) against Seattle. ... The A's optioned starter Vin Mazzaro to Triple-A Sacramento on Monday after a stretch in which the young righty went 0-6 with a 5.60 ERA and a .284 opponents' batting average in his past eight starts. Mazzaro is 6-8 with a 4.29 ERA in 21 games (18 starts) over two stints with Oakland.

Worth noting

The Mariners have scored three runs or less in 11 consecutive games (4-7). They scored four runs in the second game of a doubleheader in Boston on Aug. 25, which was the only time in its past 14 games the team reached four runs. ... The A's are batting .229 (169-for-739) with 90 runs scored over their last 23 games (3.91 runs per game). They've scored 555 for the season, which is fourth-fewest in the American League.

Major Lee-ague: More on Mazzaro

Jane Lee, mlb.com 9/6/2010 2:42PM

I don't think this was the way Vin Mazzaro envisioned spending his Labor Day. And, really, I don't think it was the way any of us thought he would. Upon arriving at the clubhouse this morning, I had heard Geren was going to have some news to share. Then, when the lineup card was posted, Landon Powell was nowhere to be found, so it was easy to assume he was part of a transaction, although it didn't make much sense, especially since he was sitting at his locker -- a full locker. But about 15 minutes later, after a new lineup had been posted with Powell's name (he had simply been forgotten on the first one), I saw Mazzaro packing up his things. That scene was followed by Geren confirming the news, that Mazzaro had indeed

been optioned to Triple-A.

The move, says A's assistant general manager David Forst, represented nothing more than an effort to help both the club and Mazzaro. Thus, the A's -- despite standing 7 games back of Texas with just a few weeks remaining in the season -- still see themselves having a fighting chance at the AL West crown it seems. So, despite it being an odd time to option someone, Forst said the move was not meant to send a message to Mazzaro or anyone else on the A's staff.

"It's not," Forst said. "If it ends up being that, fine. It's really designed to give us the best chance every five days and to give him the best chance to get better from a performance standpoint. We didn't sit around and say, 'We need to send this kid a message.' It just didn't happen."

From what I've gathered, it seems likely the A's will simply skip the next fifth spot with Thursday being an off day and then possibly move Boof Bonser into a starting role. Bonser's done well in long-relief work for the A's, most recently a 4 1/3-inning scoreless outing at Yankee Stadium.

Your thoughts on Mazzaro's departure?

Killion: A's Competing In a Vacuum

Ann Killion, CSN Bay Area, 9/7/2010

The Giants aren't the only local team enthralled by the San Diego Padres' late summer free fall. The Oakland A's are kind of digging it, too.

"I think people see that and realize anything can happen," A's manager Bob Geren said on Monday. "Until you're actually out of it."

The A's are not actually out of it. They're in a netherworld spot -- after beating hapless Seattle on Monday, they're seven games out. Far enough behind the Texas Rangers to feel regret about certain moments in the season -- say, last week's sweep at the hands of the Yankees -- but close enough to stay optimistic.

"Weird things can happen," catcher Kurt Suzuki said. "We just have to focus on our task at hand."

The latest weird thing is the Rangers trying to do their own impersonation of the Padres. With Monday's 7-4 loss to Toronto, the Rangers have dropped four straight and seven of nine.

Geren is interested in the whys and hows of the Padres problems (lack of hitting, lack of experience, overall tightness). It's a little different for the Rangers, who have some injury problems -- both Josh Hamilton and Cliff Lee are on the shelf this week.

The A's aren't really in position to do serious scoreboard watching but they're close enough to take a peek. They missed an opportunity to narrow the gap on Sunday, losing 7-4 to the Angels, while Texas lost 6-5 to Minnesota.

"We needed to win that game," Suzuki said.

They didn't, thanks to Vin Mazzaro's lousy fourth inning, when he gave up four runs in the fourth inning. One of the home runs he gave up came on a 3-0 count: in the ten instances when Mazzaro has run a batter to a 3-0 count, he's given up two homers and eight walks.

For his efforts, Mazzaro was sent to triple-A on Monday. Yes, that's an odd move for a team trying to stay in a pennant race: most teams are bringing players up from Triple-A for September depth but the A's are bucking the trend by retracting, not expanding.

"We're looking for more consistent strikes," Geren said. "He needs to improve his comment."

Mazzaro -- who hasn't won since July 24 and had a six-game losing streak -- will pitch in Sacramento's playoffs. Meanwhile,

with an off day on Thursday, the A's may skip a spot in the rotation.

The move creates the assumption that the A's still think they're in the race and don't want to let any bad outings by a starter hurt them (hello, Giants?). And it sends the message to the rest of the rotation that they better buckle down.

Brett Anderson heeded the message. He gave up just four hits in seven and two-thirds innings and left to a standing ovation from the sparse crowd.

The A's are a young team. No one on the team, save for Mark Ellis, has any experience in a playoff race, so they don't really know how to behave. To hear Geren tell it, that's a bonus.

"Our guys are really good at focusing on one game at a time," he said. "They're learning to build a routine each day and stay focused and learn good work habits. They're not concerned about a week or two down the road."

The A's are operating in a vacuum, without any of the buzz or chatter of a pennant race. On Labor Day, just over 11,000 showed up to watch the A's. The A's got the short end of the stick when it came to scheduling this year -- out of town on Memorial Day and the Fourth of July and hosting interleague games against Cincinnati and Pittsburgh.

But on a gorgeous three-day weekend, with three consecutive 1 p.m. starts, the A's only managed to draw a total of 42,221 -- about 4,000 fewer fans than the Yankees average for one game.

Even though no one's paying attention, the A's are still involved. And if they can stay that way until their four-game home series with the Rangers in late September, maybe the Bay Area will sit up and notice.

A's beat Mariners, 6-2

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Coco Crisp and Matt Carson each hit solo home runs to back Brett Anderson, and the Oakland Athletics beat the Seattle Mariners 6-2 Monday.

Anderson (4-6) allowed four hits in a season-high 7½ innings and left to a standing ovation. He ended a four-game losing streak that matched the longest of his career.

Then again, most everyone seems to be shutting down Seattle lately. The Mariners have scored three or fewer runs in 11 straight games.

Crisp homered in the first, Oakland's first leadoff homer of the season. It was the third leadoff home run of Crisp's career and his first since Aug. 18, 2003, against Tampa Bay.

Oakland has won six in a row at home against the Mariners. Franklin Gutierrez hit a solo homer in the seventh for Seattle's first run and Jose Lopez had a ninth-inning sacrifice fly.

After Crisp homered, Daric Barton followed Crisp's homer with a triple off the wall in right field that Ichiro Suzuki appeared to lose in the sun. Kurt Suzuki's RBI groundout one batter later made it 2-0.

Crisp added an RBI single in the fourth and Jack Cust singled in a run in the seventh.

Anderson struck out four and didn't walk a batter. He earned just his second win since coming off the disabled list for a second time this year on July 30 from an elbow injury. He got Casey Kotchman to ground into a double play in the second, the first of 13 straight outs by the pitcher before Ichiro's two-out single in the sixth.

Anderson was rewarded in April with a \$12.5 million, four-year contract that includes club options for 2014 and 2015.

The A's have won all their meetings with the Mariners in the Coliseum this season since an opening day loss back on April 5. Oakland won for the 15th time in its last 20 day games and improved to a majors-best 32-15 in afternoon contests.

Jason Vargas (9-9) lost his fourth straight start and was done after 4 1-3 innings, matching his shortest outing of the year. He allowed five runs on seven hits.

Gutierrez returned to the lineup after missing two games with a stomach bug and recorded an RBI for the fourth straight game. He also hit a ninth-inning double.

Notes: Anderson didn't issue a walk for the fifth time in 2010. ... Carson's fourth-inning leadoff homer snapped an 0-for-15 funk.

Anderson wins for the first time in a month as A's down Mariners, 6-2

Sam McPherson, examiner.com

Save one pitch in the seventh inning, Oakland Athletics starter Brett Anderson was pretty darn good on Monday.

The A's young lefty, who signed a \$12.5M contract extension in April before his season was derailed by injuries, won for the first time since August 4 with 7 2/3 strong innings today at home against the Seattle Mariners. In the 6-2 win, Anderson struck out four batters without issuing a walk.

He also got all the offense he needed in the first inning, as Coco Crisp hit a solo home run leading off the bottom of the first inning and Kurt Suzuki added another run by driving in Daric Barton. The A's later got a solo home run from Matt Carson in the fourth inning, as Oakland built a 5-0 lead in the first five innings.

But Anderson's return to the win column was most important. He'd gone 0-4 since his last win, although his ERA hovered in the same low realms all August, rising only .03 through the four losses.

Today, he left no doubt as to his vast potential, although facing Seattle -- with the worst offense in the American League -- tends to make almost any pitcher look good.

Even so, Anderson only gave up four hits in his outing, and he allowed only two runners to reach third base -- including the home run he gave up to Franklin Gutierrez leading off the top of the seventh. But the lefty kept Seattle's hitters off all game, as the Mariners fouled off 18 pitches and took 21 tosses for called strikes.

With the win, Anderson improved to 4-6 on the year and lowered his ERA to 2.97 in 2010. He also demonstrated no ill effects from a recent knee injury, while registering his fifth walk-free start this year.

If the A's look to contend in 2011, they'll need Anderson 100% healthy, and it's important to keep him winning through the end of this season, too

A's Game 136 Report Card: Mazzaro sent down to Sacramento after rough start

Sam McPherson, examiner.com

Offense: Every starter in the lineup had a hit, as the A's amassed 11 hits and four walks. Yet they scored only four runs. They went 3-for-11 with RISP, but left 11 men on base. Why? Amongst the 11 hits, there was a single extra-base swing: Jeff Larish's double that scored two runs in the fourth. The Angels had the same number of hits, but they also had two home runs. Those long fly balls make a difference, and the A's are second-to-last in the AL in both HRs and OPS. That's why they can't score enough runs, even when they do get the hits. **GRADE: C+**

Defense: Another reason the Angels scored more runs was the fact they stole three bases off Landon Powell. The Oakland regular at catcher, Kurt Suzuki, has the worst percentage amongst AL regulars (21.9%) at throwing out base stealers, but clearly Powell struggled yesterday, too, even though he's thrown out 38.1% of base stealers this year. **GRADE: B**

Pitching: No way around it, Vin Mazzaro was not good on Sunday. He didn't strikeout anyone, and he allowed six hits and three walks in 4.1 innings. The two home runs hurt, but the run in the fifth was bad, too – because it came right after the A's offense had scored to make it 4-3. By the way, Mazzaro was optioned to Sacramento today. Finally, Boof Bonser gave up the other two runs; otherwise, the rest of the bullpen was sound. **GRADE: D**

Coaching: There wasn't much Bob Geren could do on Sunday but wait and wait for the big hit to come. He took Mazzaro out when he should have, and other than letting Bonser into the game when he shouldn't have (his 5.17 ERA for the year is all you need to know), Geren did fine. **GRADE: B**

Overall Game Grade: C (76.9%). The lack of power hurt the offense again, while the pitching and defense didn't have great days, either. Still it could have been a winnable game, since the Angeles gave the A's plenty of chances. Good teams take advantage of those opportunities.

Overall Season Grade: B (83.82%). Winning the series against Los Angeles was a nice start to the homestand, and it'd be good to bury the Mariners over the next three days. Seattle is 21 games out of first place and has the worst offense in the league.

A's Record: 67-69. Kevin Kouzmanoff left the game with back spasms, and he's listed as day-to-day right now. Steve Tolleson will start at third for Oakland in Monday's game against the Mariners, along with Matt Carson getting the nod in right field.

A's "Should Be" Record: 71-65. Brett Anderson starts today's day game for Oakland, and he's looking to win for the first time since August 4. His ERA has risen from 3.14 to 3.17 in that time period, but he's 0-4 since then. For the year, Anderson has given up 75 hits in 71 innings; he needs to improve that number, and he can do that today against Seattle's punchless offense.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Sacramento heads into Playoffs with loss

Sacramento River Cats

Colorado Springs used a five-run fourth inning to take the lead and roll to a 7-3 victory over visiting Sacramento in both teams' regular season finale.

The River Cats next open the PCL Playoffs, hosting the Tacoma Rainiers in the Pacific Conference Championship Series with Games 1 (Wednesday, 7:05 p.m.) and 2 (Thursday, 7:05 p.m.) at Raley Field. Games 3, 4 and 5 will be Friday through Sunday at Safeco Field in Seattle.

Sacramento catcher Anthony Recker went 3-for-4 with a two-run homer, his 10th home run of the season, to finish the season on a hitting tear. Recker hit .370 in August with four home runs and 15 RBIs, then turned it on again with a .455 average over six games in September. After hitting .222 in 126 at-bats before the All-Star Break, Recker hit .355 after the All-Star Break. He is currently riding a seven-game hitting streak.

The River Cats took a 1-0 lead in the fourth when Recker doubled and scored on a Corey Brown single. However, the Sky Sox stormed back with seven runs off Sacramento starter Brett Tomko in the fourth and fifth innings.

Sacramento's bullpen pitched 3.1 scoreless innings.

Tacoma (74-69) clinched the Pacific North Division title Sunday with a 9-0 win over Fresno. Sacramento split the season series 8-8 with the Rainiers, with each team going 4-4 at their home ballpark. Tacoma will play their first-round games at Safeco Field, home of the Seattle Mariners, because of construction at their home ballpark, Cheney Stadium.

Clayton Mortensen (13-6, 4.25) will start Game 1 for Sacramento. Tacoma's starter has yet to be named.

The River Cats have faced Tacoma three previous times in the postseason, including last season when Sacramento took three of four games. The River Cats split the first two games of the first-round series at Tacoma, then closed the series with wins in Games 3 and 4 at Raley Field. Chris Carter hit a home run in each of the four games. The slugger's four postseason homers tied a River Cats record, set four other times.

The River Cats lost to the Memphis Redbirds in the PCL Championship Series. The River Cats also faced Tacoma in 2001 and 2005. In 2001, Sacramento held a 2-1 series lead before losing Games 4 and 5 at Raley Field to lose the series. In 2005, Sacramento won Games 1 and 2 in Tacoma before losing Games 3, 5 and 5 at Raley Field. This is the first time Sacramento has opened a series against Tacoma at home.

Sacramento has won nine division titles in 11 seasons, and is looking to claim its fifth PCL title and third Triple-A Championship.

Midland takes Texas South title

By John Parker / Special to MLB.com

The Midland RockHounds already had clinched a playoff berth, but their 9-3 win over the visiting Frisco RoughRiders on Monday night gave them the second-half title in the Double-A Texas League's South Division as well.

"I told the team that we play every game to win," manager Darren Bush said. "We want to celebrate championships, not Wild Cards."

In a preview of the Texas League playoffs, the Oakland-affiliated RockHounds used a balanced attack to top the first-half champion RoughRiders and claim home field advantage in the first round.

After facing each other 28 times this season -- Midland won 13, Frisco 15 -- the two clubs will play a best-of-5 series starting Wednesday at Frisco's Dr Pepper Ballpark for the right to go to the Texas League Finals.

Both teams husbanded their resources in preparation for the postseason. Midland left-hander Derrick Gordon made his first start of the season, while the Texas affiliate used Michael Schlact, who has worked as a reliever since making his last start Aug. 13.

All nine hitters in the Midland lineup reached base. Outfielders Jermaine Mitchell and Val Majewski drove in two runs apiece, and leadoff man Jemile Weeks delivered a three-run triple in the eighth inning to put the game out of reach.

Midland reliever Justin Friend (3-3) got the win after tossing 2 1/3 hitless frames. He struck out one and walked four.

Schlact (1-5) took the loss for Frisco, allowing four runs -- three earned -- on four hits in four innings. The 6-foot-7 right-hander fanned one and walked two while seeing his ERA rise to 7.09.

Midland finished the season 70-70 and the second half 35-35, becoming the first team in Texas League history to win a half-season title with a .500 record. The 'Hounds' best month was July, when they went 18-11. They slipped to 12-17 in August and have split six September games.

Like all Minor League clubs, the RockHounds have lost players to promotion. Hitters Jeff Baisley and Corey Brown, starter Travis Banwart and closer Jared Lansford have all moved up to Triple-A Sacramento.

"We've been lucky to have guys promoted," Bush said. "We've had a lot of turnover, but players keep stepping up at different times for us and that's what you're looking for in the Minor Leagues."

The RockHounds are a team with championship experience, however. They claimed the Texas League title last season, and Bush is looking for his third straight championship, having led Stockton to the California League title in 2008.

All five Athletics farm teams -- Sacramento, Midland, Stockton, Class A Kane County and Class A Short-Season Vancouver -- have made the playoffs in their respective leagues.

"We have a quality organization with a lot of people that work really hard. I'm happy to be a part of it," Bush said.

Ports End Regular Season With 4-3 Win

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. - The Stockton Ports left the 2010 regular season on a very high note on Monday. The Ports defeated the Bakersfield Blaze by a final of 4-3 and in doing so, took three of four in the season's final series to head into the playoffs with positive momentum.

The Ports opened the scoring in the second when Mike Spina launched his team-leading 23rd home run of the season to start the frame.

Bakersfield came back in the last of the third with a pair of runs off Ports starter Fabian Williamson (5-2). With two down, Williamson walked Joe Bonadonna who stole second. Erik Morrison followed by hitting a ball deep in the hole at third. Stephen Parker made a diving stop, then threw low to first-a ball Spina couldn't dig that went into foul territory and out of play. It was ruled a hit and an error that scored Bonadonna and tied the game at 1-1. After Williamson walked Chris McGuiness, Mike Bianucci singled to left-center to put the Blaze up 2-1.

The two runs in the third were the only runs allowed by Williamson, who earned the win after going five innings and allowing three hits while walking five and striking out four.

The Ports took the lead back in the top of the sixth. With two on and two out, Todd Johnson doubled to the right-field fence to score two runs and put the Ports on top 3-2.

Stockton made it 4-2 in the seventh with a leadoff home run off the bat of Kent Walton.

All four Ports runs were charged to Blaze starter Wilfredo Boscan (9-14), who took the loss after going seven innings, allowing eight hits while walking two and striking out two.

The Ports got solid relief pitching down the stretch. Scott Deal tossed a perfect sixth inning. Scott Hodsdon (SV, 4) came on to start the seventh and allowed an unearned run on an RBI groundout from Morrison. The run was set up by an error made by Spina on the previous play.

Hodsdon, in the ninth, allowed a one-out single to Vinny DiFazio and two batters later walked Bonadonna to put the possible tying run in scoring position. Morrison came to the plate and hit a smash to third that was caught on a dive by Parker to end the ballgame and preserve the Ports win and Hodsdon's fourth save of the season.

On the season's final day, Visalia lost to San Jose while Modesto beat Inland Empire, giving the Nuts an unlikely playoff berth. The Ports will play the Nuts beginning on Wednesday in a best-of-three mini-series. Game 1 will be at John Thurman Field, while Game 2 and Game 3 (if necessary) will be at Banner Island Ballpark. All three games will start at 7:05 p.m. PDT with the pitching matchups still to be determined.

Playoff tickets for the games at Banner Island Ballpark are on sale now and can be purchased by visiting www.stocktonports.com, by phone at (209) 644-1900 or in person at the Ports Box Office.

Cougars Lose Regular-Season Finale

Kane County puts wrap on 20th regular season, looks to playoffs

GENEVA, III. – The Kane County Cougars wrapped up their 20th regular season on Monday afternoon with a 7-0 loss against the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers in front of 5,182 at Elfstrom Stadium. The Cougars' winning streak ended at five, and the team fell one win short of the 10th 40-win half in franchise history. Now the Cougars look to the post-season, which begins Wednesday night on their home turf against Quad Cities.

Kenny Smalley (0-2) was perfect through three innings in the spot start but gave up two runs in the fourth and suffered the loss. Bo Schultz yielded five runs over 3 1/3 innings, and Max Peterson pitched 1 2/3 scoreless innings. Offensively the Cougars had only five hits, two of which came from Jason Christian. Rashun Dixon singled in the eighth to advance his season-best hitting streak to 12 games, and Anthony Aliotti snapped a nine-game streak. Nick Bucci (6-7) won it for the Rattlers (32-38, 58-80).

The Cougars (39-30, 71-67) begin post-season play Wednesday night at 6:30 CT with Game 1 in a best-of-three first-round series against the Quad Cities River Bandits (43-26, 83-55). Murphy Smith (8-2, 3.64) will face Shelby Miller (7-5, 3.62). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and www.kccougars.com with pre-game coverage starting at 6:15 p.m.

Oakland A's MLN: 2010 Leaders

Melissa Lockard, OaklandClubhouse.com

Sep 7, 2010

On Monday night, the 2010 minor league regular season came to an end. We take a look at the statistical leaders in the Oakland A's minor league system, and review the Vancouver Canadians' playoff opener.

2010 Oakland A's Minor League Statistical Leaders

Full Season Offensive Leaders

Minimum 250 at-bats

Batting Average

[Grant Green](#), Stockton: .318

[Adrian Cardenas](#), Midland/Sacramento: .304

[Jeff Baisley](#), Midland/Sacramento: .301

[Eric Sogard](#), Sacramento: .300

[Josh Horton](#), Stockton/Midland: .298

Home Runs

[Chris Carter](#), Sacramento: 31

[Michael Spina](#), Stockton: 23

[Dallas McPherson](#), Sacramento: 22

[Stephen Parker](#), Stockton: 21

Grant Green, Stockton: 20

RBI's

Stephen Parker, Stockton: 98

Chris Carter, Sacramento: 94

[Jeremy Barfield](#), Stockton: 92

Michael Spina, Stockton: 88

Grant Green, Stockton: 87

Stolen Bases

[Corey Wimberly](#), Sacramento: 56

[Tyreece House](#), Kane County: 37

[Archie Gilbert](#), Midland: 28

[Conner Crumbliss](#), Kane County: 24

[Jermaine Mitchell](#), Stockton/Midland/Sacramento: 24

Walks

Conner Crumbliss, Kane County: 126

Tyreece House, Kane County: 96

[Anthony Aliotti](#), Kane County: 92

Stephen Parker, Stockton: 84

Eric Sogard, Sacramento: 75

On-Base Percentage

Conner Crumbliss, Kane County: .421
Steven Tolleson, Sacramento: .412
Anthony Aliotti, Kane County: .397
Tyreace House, Kane County: .396
Stephen Parker, Stockton: .392

Slugging Percentage

Dallas McPherson, Sacramento: .541
Chris Carter, Sacramento: .529
Grant Green, Stockton: .520
Stephen Parker, Stockton: .508
Steven Tolleson, Sacramento: .503

Short-Season Offensive Leaders

Minimum 100 at-bats

Batting Average

Royce Consigli, AZL A's: .340
Zhi-Fang Pan, AZL A's: .331
Douglas Landaeta, Vancouver: .293
Michael Choice, Vancouver: .284
Luis Baez, DSL A's: .282

Home Runs

A.J. Kirby-Jones, Vancouver: 12
Michael Choice, Vancouver: 7
Miguel Marte, AZL A's/DSL A's: 6
Michael Soto, DSL A's: 5
Luis Baez, DSL A's: 4
Josh Whitaker, Vancouver/AZL A's: 4

RBI's

A.J. Kirby-Jones, Vancouver: 42
Michael Soto, DSL A's: 36
Ryan Lipkin, Vancouver: 33
Douglas Landaeta, Vancouver: 32
Royce Consigli, AZL A's: 31

Stolen Bases

Luis Osorio, DSL A's: 15
Rodolfo Penalo, DSL A's: 12
Jeff Bercume, Vancouver: 10
Luis Baez, DSL A's: 10
Neudy Clime, AZL A's: 9

Walks

A.J. Kirby-Jones, Vancouver: 61
Michael Soto, DSL A's: 35
Reynaldo Mateo, DSL A's: 32
Luis Osorio, DSL A's: 31
Wilfredo Solano, DSL A's: 30
Tony Thompson, Vancouver: 23

On-Base Percentage

A.J. Kirby-Jones, Vancouver: .417
Royce Consigli, AZL A's: .406
Michael Choice, Vancouver: .388
Zhi-Fang Pan, AZL A's: .386
Reynaldo Mateo, DSL A's: .385

Slugging Percentage

Michael Choice, Vancouver: .627
Royce Consigli, AZL A's: .487
A.J. Kirby-Jones, Vancouver: .470
Luis Baez, DSL A's: .453
Zhi-Fang Pan, AZL A's: .439

Full Season Pitching Leaders

Wins

Clayton Mortensen, Sacramento: 13
Murphy Smith, Stockton/Kane County: 11
Ian Krol, Kane County/Stockton: 10
Ryan Edell, Midland: 10
Justin Murray, Stockton/Midland: 10
Daniel Straily, Kane County: 10

ERA (ERA title eligible only)

Ian Krol, Kane County/Stockton: 2.80
Ryan Edell, Midland: 3.17
Shawn Haviland, Stockton: 3.69
Justin Murray, Stockton/Midland: 3.75
Travis Banwart, Midland/Sacramento: 3.80

Saves

Paul Smyth, Stockton: 28
Jose Guzman, Kane County: 18
Jared Lansford, Midland/Sacramento: 12
Henry Rodriguez, Sacramento: 11
Mickey Storey, Midland/Sacramento: 9

Strike-outs

Shawn Haviland, Stockton: 169
Daniel Straily, Kane County: 149
Ben Hornbeck, Stockton/Midland: 138
Justin Marks, Kane County/Stockton: 136
Travis Banwart, Midland/Sacramento: 130

Short-Season Pitching Leaders

Wins

Nathan Long, Vancouver: 8
Argenis Paez, AZL A's: 6
Aaron Larsen, AZL A's: 5
Luis Jose, DSL A's: 5
Several tied with four wins

ERA (starters only)

Robinson De Los Santos, DSL A's: 1.73
Matt Thomson, Vancouver/Stockton: 1.94
Seth Frankoff, AZL A's/Vancouver: 2.81
Nathan Long, Vancouver: 3.10
Tyler Vail, AZL A's: 3.13

Saves

A.J. Griffin, Vancouver: 15
Victor Trinidad, DSL A's: 10
Michael Hart, Vancouver/Stockton: 7
Luis Jose, DSL A's: 4
Several tied with 2

Strike-outs

Anvioris Ramirez, Stockton/Kane County/Vancouver: 82
Robinson De Los Santos, DSL A's: 77

Matt Thomson, Vancouver/Stockton: 71

Joselito Adames, AZL A's: 59

Omar Duran, AZL A's: 54

Vancouver Falls In Game One

Vancouver was the first of the A's five playoff-bound teams to get underway in the post-season. Despite a dramatic ninth inning comeback, the Canadians lost game one of their best-of-three game series versus Everett.

Down two runs with two-outs in the bottom of the ninth, the C's tied the game when Ryan Pineda launched a two-run homerun. Vancouver was unable to maintain the momentum, however, as the normally reliable Daniel Tenholder walked four in the top of the 10th. Everett would eventually score all four runners en route to a 9-5, 10-inning win. Vancouver will need to win the next two games to advance to the finals.

Matt Thomson got the start for Vancouver, and the regular season ace struggled. He allowed five runs (four earned) on eight hits in five innings. He did strike-out six and walked only one. Thomson struck-out 61 and walked only eight for Vancouver during the regular season. Even if the C's advance to the next round, Thomson will have pitched his last game of the season, as he returned to San Diego after the game to start classes at the University of San Diego.

Pineda had a big game at the top of the C's line-up. In addition to the two-run homer, Pineda walked twice and had a double. Douglas Landaeta's triple was the C's only other extra-base hit.

Midland Wins Second-Half Title

Having already clinched a playoff spot earlier in the weekend, the Midland Rockhounds put the final touches on a strong second half by winning the second-half division title with a 9-3 win over Frisco.

Jemile Weeks had a triple and three RBIs. He was one of four players, along with Jermaine Mitchell, Val Majewski and Josh Horton, to have two-hit games. Majewski and Mitchell also added two RBIs apiece.

The Midland starters were rested to get ready for the post-season and reliever Derrick Gordon got the start. He tossed 2.2 scoreless innings. Justin Friend got the win with 2.1 shut-out frames.

Midland will begin their defense of their Texas League title on Wednesday against these same Frisco Roughriders. By winning the second-half division title, the Rockhounds will have home-field advantage in the series.