

A's News Clips, Thursday, June 9, 2011

Oakland A's lose ninth in a row

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

BALTIMORE -- Josh Outman was putting forth an outing worthy of ending a losing streak.

But fortunes can turn quickly, as the A's left-hander discovered Wednesday in a 3-2 loss to the Baltimore Orioles on a sweltering night at Camden Yards.

Outman had two outs in the fifth inning and a runner on second base in a scoreless game.

J.J. Hardy hit a 3-2 changeup into center field for an RBI single. On the next pitch, Mark Reynolds sent a fastball over the left-field wall for a two-run home run.

Two pitches.

Three runs.

One insurmountable deficit -- considering how things are going for the A's right now.

"It's the way the game works," said Outman, who fell to 1-1. "Neither one was a bad pitch locationwise."

There's little margin for error for anyone wearing an Oakland uniform these days.

The A's were swept for the third consecutive series, and their nine-game losing streak is their longest since they dropped 10 in a row from July 28-Aug. 7, 2008.

The A's mustered just four runs and 17 hits in the three-game series against the Orioles.

Wednesday's offensive output wasn't enough to offset Outman's brief hiccup. He allowed five hits over six innings, striking out four with no walks.

Outman insists the tide is bound to turn for the A's, who are eight games behind first-place Texas in the American League West.

"We just can't buy a hit when we've needed one," Outman said. "There's no doubt in this clubhouse that this is a team capable of winning, and winning this division."

A's manager Bob Geren was asked if he sees a common thread in the nine losses.

"They've outscored us, outpitched us and outhit us," Geren said. "That equals losses."

Trailing 3-0 in the sixth, the A's had their best opportunity with runners on the corners and no outs. Daric Barton hit into a 4-6-3 double play, which scored Jemile Weeks but stunted a promising rally.

"First and third, nobody out," Geren said. "That was a big one."

Before the game, Geren said he has toyed with shifting Cliff Pennington from the bottom of the order to the second spot and returning Barton to the sixth spot.

Barton was hitting .206 before Geren dropped him from second to sixth on Friday against Boston. Barton went 6 for 12 in three games hitting sixth, but since Geren shifted him back to the second spot, he is 1 for 11.

Pennington, who has hit ninth most of the season, is batting .351 (20 for 57) over his past 16 games and .260 overall.

Designated hitter Hideki Matsui, who didn't play Wednesday, has essentially been used as a platoon player against right-handed starters for the past month. But Geren said Matsui, hitting just .209, might get extended playing time coming up. He didn't specify when.

Weeks was a bright spot Wednesday. He doubled in the third for his first big league hit and scored both Oakland runs.

"It's something you want to get out of the way as soon as you can," Weeks said of his first hit.

In the eighth, he hit a ball that deflected off the glove of Orioles left fielder Nolan Reimold for an error. Weeks turned on the jets to get to third, diving headfirst ahead of Reynolds' tag.

"That's what fans in the Bay Area are going to see," Geren said, "a guy that can bring some energy and excitement to the team."

Oakland A's update: Pitcher Graham Godfrey will get call to start against Chicago White Sox on Friday

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

BALTIMORE -- Right-hander Graham Godfrey will be called up from Triple-A Sacramento to start Friday against the Chicago White Sox, A's manager Bob Geren said Wednesday.

Godfrey, 26, will make his major league debut filling in for Brett Anderson, who went on the 15-day disabled list Tuesday with elbow soreness.

Geren said he wasn't real familiar with Godfrey, who has not been in big league spring camp since being obtained from Toronto after the 2007 season. The A's acquired Godfrey and pitcher Kristian Bell for infielder Marco Scutaro.

"He doesn't overpower you, but he's very aggressive with his fastball," A's director of player development Keith Lieppman said.

Godfrey is 7-1 with a 2.50 ERA with the River Cats.

Left-hander Bobby Cramer, who was a candidate to start Friday, could be shipped out to clear a roster spot for Godfrey. The A's also must clear a 40-man roster spot.

Among the notables the A's selected on the final day of the amateur draft: Geren's son Brett, a catcher out of San Ramon Valley High-Danville, taken in the 42nd round, and 39th-round pick Shane Boras, a USC second baseman and son of agent Scott Boras.

Brett Geren, though, plans to join his older brother Bobby at Princeton.

The A's also took outfielder Jeriel Waller (47th round), nephew of first-base coach Tye Waller; and third baseman Nick Coffman (40th) and shortstop Brett Bittiger (41st), sons of A's scouts Jim Coffman and Jeff Bittiger.

Other A's picks with local ties were Cal second baseman/outfielder Austin Booker (33rd), St. Francis High shortstop Alex Blandino (38th) and Pinole Valley High-Pinole outfielder Travis Feeney (48th). Feeney has signed to play football at Washington.

Outfielder Chris Carter is spending time with Single-A Stockton to collect at-bats as he returns from a thumb injury, then he'll rejoin Sacramento, Lieppman said.

Because of the River Cats' outfield depth, Lieppman said the A's are having Carter work at first base again as well as left field. "... A player turning heads is Midland center fielder Jermaine Mitchell. At age 26, Mitchell is hardly a young prospect. But he entered Wednesday leading the Double-A Texas League in batting average (.370) and triples (13), and the A's have had him working with Rickey Henderson.

Infielder Andy LaRoche cleared waivers and was outrighted to Sacramento.

Chin Music: A's to promote RHP Graham Godfrey for Friday start

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 6/8/2011 4:12pm

A rapid-fire rundown of the pregame news, as the A's try to avoid a sweep ...

–Right-hander Graham Godfrey will be called up from Triple-A to take Friday's start in place of Brett Anderson. That will mark the big league debut for Godfrey, 26. He wasn't a regular invitee to big league spring training, so Godfrey is a bit of an unknown quantity if you haven't been following the A's farm system carefully. But I'm told he's got a decent fastball that used to be around 91 miles per hour but has increased a tick in velocity this season. He also has a nice changeup. Keith Lieppman, the A's director of player development, compares him a bit to Guillermo Moscoso in his approach. The A's will have to clear a spot on the 40-man roster for Godfrey, but they don't have to do that until Friday.

–A's manager Bob Geren said that Hideki Matsui could (emphasis on "could") be in line for a regular block of playing time soon in an effort to jumpstart his bat. Geren didn't give a time frame for when that might happen. You've noticed that Matsui has essentially become a platoon DH against right-handers. He's out of the lineup tonight against Orioles lefty Zach Britton. I know there's a lot of speculation right now about whether the A's might cut ties with Matsui at some point considering how much he's struggled. But, based on what Geren is saying, it looks as if Matsui might get a chance to hit his way out of that slump. What exactly that will consist of – a string of consecutive starts against righties and lefties? – I don't know. Stay tuned on that front ...

–Geren also said he's toyed with the idea of hitting Cliff Pennington second and sliding Daric Barton back down to the sixth spot. It makes sense. Pennington has been one of the A's best hitters lately, and Barton seemed very comfortable hitting lower in the order. Again, no indication from Geren when such a move might happen. And he only said he was considering it ...

–Coco Crisp has another new hairstyle. He's shaved each side of his head, sort of giving him a Mohawk look. Or a "Mo-Fro," as I heard someone near the batting cage tell him.

Tonight's lineups:

A's – Crisp CF, Barton 1B, Jackson LF, Willingham DH, Suzuki C, DeJesus RF, Rosales 3B, Pennington SS, Weeks 2B; Outman LHP.

Orioles – Andino 2B, Markakis RF, Jones CF, Guerrero DH, Lee 1B, Wieters C, Hardy SS, Reynolds 3B, Reimold LF; Britton LHP.

A's lose 9th in a row. 3-2 in Baltimore

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

The A's are in a tailspin all right, and the outlook is becoming increasingly dim.

After the team's ninth consecutive loss, this time 3-2 at Camden Yards on Wednesday - yes, that's a sweep for the last-place Orioles - the A's are eight games back in the AL West. If they drop much further, questions about manager Bob Geren's job status will intensify, as will trade rumors.

The hottest commodity would be outfielder Josh Willingham, who will be a free agent after the season. Oakland has not had talks with Willingham or his agent about signing the team's top RBI man (by far) to a long-term deal.

Willingham is precisely the type of player who, in past years, has been moved in the middle of losing seasons. He already has been linked to the Phillies, a team that wanted him last year.

The A's probably aren't ready to unload players yet. It's reasonably early and all the AL West clubs have their flaws.

The players certainly haven't abandoned hope.

"There's no doubt in anyone's mind in this clubhouse that this team is capable of winning - and winning the division," said Josh Outman, who Wednesday made his best start since coming back from Tommy John surgery, allowing five hits and three runs in six innings.

Geren is not signed beyond this year, but it is considered unlikely that he'd be fired during the season. He and general manager Billy Beane are longtime friends. Beane always has praised the job Geren has done and has pointed to the team's high number of injuries as a reason that the club has not flourished. Oakland has five starting pitchers on the disabled list.

At some point, the team might have to address Hideki Matsui's lack of production. Oakland's designated hitter is batting .209 with three homers and 20 RBIs, and lately, more often than not, he has been on the bench. Geren said Wednesday he might consider an extended stretch of playing time soon for Matsui to see if regular at-bats might get him going.

The A's losing streak is their longest since a 10-game skid in July 2008. The team has scored seven runs in the past four games, and it was five-hit by Zach Britton and two relievers Wednesday.

Oakland did get excellent defense: Coco Crisp made a terrific running catch in the second, slamming into the wall in center for a drive by Vladimir Guerrero, and Cliff Pennington made a great stop on a sharp shot into the hole by J.J. Hardy in the third.

Skid row

The A's nine-game losing streak is tied for the sixth longest in Oakland history. The five worst streaks since the team began playing at the Coliseum in 1968:

14 July 29-Aug. 12, 1977

12 April 19-30, 1994

12 Sept. 22, 1995-April 4, 1996*

11 June 8-18, 1978

10 July 28-Aug. 7, 2008

*Note: That streak encompassed the final nine games of the 1995 season and the first three games in '96.

Rookie Graham Godfrey to start Friday for A's

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

The A's opened the season with one rookie, 31-year-old **Bobby Cramer**, on the roster, but by Friday, they'll probably have two.

On Friday, Oakland will call up 26-year-old right-hander **Graham Godfrey** from Triple-A Sacramento to fill the spot left open when **Brett Anderson** went on the disabled list. Godfrey, acquired in the **Marco Scutaro** deal with Toronto after the 2007 season, is 7-1 at Sacramento, with 51 strikeouts and 15 walks in 54 1/3 innings.

The A's brought up second baseman **Jemile Weeks** on Tuesday and he went 0-for-4 in the leadoff spot. On Wednesday, **Coco Crisp** was back hitting leadoff, and Weeks hit ninth, recording his first big-league hit, a double to left off **Zach Britton** in the third inning.

The ball did get thrown into the dugout, but Weeks said he didn't have it yet. "It felt great to get it out of the way," said Weeks, who also singled in the sixth. "Today was my day, I guess. ... I'm excited, that's something I hope I can do all season, as long as I'm here."

Weeks reached on a three-base error in the eighth and jammed his neck sliding into third, but he said he's OK. He scored both of Oakland's runs.

Last day of draft: On the final day of the draft, the A's took some familiar names - a Geren, a Waller and ... a Boras?

The A's are among the teams that sometimes steer clear of **Scott Boras** clients because the high-powered agent's players typically command large signing bonuses. Oakland took USC second baseman **Shane Boras** on Wednesday, and Scott Boras chuckled when asked if he would handle the negotiations.

"His mother is representing Shane," Boras said of wife **Jeanette**, who is also advising the couple's other son, **Trent**, picked by Milwaukee in the 30th round.

The A's are expected to be able to get Boras signed, unlike catcher **Brett Geren**. **Bob Geren**'s son will join brother **Bobby**, an A's pick last year, at Princeton.

Other picks included outfielder **Jeriel Waller**, the nephew of first-base coach **Tye Waller**, and third baseman **Nic Coffman** and shortstop **Brett Bittiger**, the sons of A's scouts **Jim Coffman** and **Jeff Bittiger**.

Oakland also selected Cal second baseman **Austin Booker**, St. Francis High shortstop **Alex Blandino**, Pinole Valley High outfielder **Travis Feeney** and two players from Vacaville High, shortstop **Brenden Farney** and outfielder **C.J. Jacobe**.

Briefly: Infielder **Andy LaRoche** was outrighted to Triple-A Sacramento.

Leading off

Hairdos and don'ts: Several A's got their hair cut short because of the 98-degree heat in Baltimore, and Coco Crisp took it to an extreme, shaving both sides of his head and leaving the rest of his Afro untouched in the middle.

6 things that are wrong with the world

Bruce Jenkins, San Francisco Chronicle

Short takes for a Thursday morning:

LeBron James doesn't get off anybody's hook for scoring nine total points in the fourth quarters of the NBA Finals, but two things to remember: He's a facilitator at heart, not a dominator, and he left Cleveland for Miami so he could get plenty of help. Secondly, the Heat's offense is so inexcusably short of imagination — especially against the Dallas zone — Le-Bron isn't getting much help from his coach.

Dwyane Wade was off-thecharts spectacular in Game 4, but in the final, make-or-break possession, he dropped a routine inbounds pass and then kicked it several feet away. How is that even possible?

So you're fed up with Jonathan Sanchez's wildness and you don't much care about Barry Zito. You're safely within the majority. Just remember that the Giants have no rotation depth, no answer in a health crisis unless one of their minorleaguers makes a surprising ascent. Sanchez stays — and given the Giants' financial investment in Zito, along with his unfailingly good attitude, he has to make a few starts in the big leagues this season. Don't ask how, but it has to happen.

Now we get an even bigger joke than the BCS "playoff" system: its decision to strip USC of the 2004 national title.

The Trojans should only laugh at this, and remember that a more responsible group (Associated Press) still recognizes the achievement. That was 14 totally legitimate wins by the best team in the country by far — absolutely well deserved. Just like Reggie Bush's 2005 Heisman Trophy.

Michael Crabtree needs to brush up his resume before he becomes a 49ers spokesman, but it's about time someone questioned Alex Smith's status as the team's No. 1 quarterback.

Because it's a guaranteed trip to nowhere, a waste of everyone's time.

Is there a more pathetic ongoing saga than the naming rights to the (as we like to call it) Oakland Coliseum? Now we hear that Overstock.com, whatever the hell that is, has shortened it to the "O.co. Coliseum." I swear, I'm not making up this stuff.

They should end this charade and change it to "Oblivion."

Drumbeat: Graham Godfrey will come up to start for A's Friday, his big-league debut

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Camden Yards 6/8/2011 2:53pm

I'd mentioned in this morning's paper that Graham Godfrey would be the top non-roster possibility to start on Friday for Oakland, and that's exactly what will happen - Godfrey, who is 7-1 at Triple-A Sacramento, will make his major-league debut on Friday at Chicago.

Godfrey, a 26-year-old right-hander, was acquired along with right-hander Kristian Bell for super-sub Marco Scutaro in a deal with Toronto after the 2007 season. That was a trade that I didn't like much at the time, considering Scutaro's value to the A's and his nose for the big hit. Well, this is the chance for that trade to produce something - if Godfrey can stick in the A's rotation, that would be a huge for a team that has placed five starting pitchers on the DL already this season. That could more than make up for the loss of Scutaro.

Godfrey is having a very nice season; he has a 2.50 ERA and batters are hitting .222 against him. The A's are big on strikeouts to walk ration, and he's struck out 45 and walked 14 in 50 1/3 innings. If you add in his four innings at Midland, it's 51 strikeouts total and 15 walks.

Bobby Cramer is the man most likely to be sent out when Godfrey arrives to take the Brett Anderson spot in the rotation. The A's would need to make a 40-man roster move to get Godfrey onto the roster; it's likely a player would have to go through waivers, because no 60-day DL candidates jump out, unless the A's already have a good idea that Anderson needs Tommy John surgery. Anderson saw a team orthopedist last night and got an MRI but the A's did not release any diagnosis from that visit because Anderson is next going to Dr. James Andrews early next week for a second opinion.

Tommy John surgery is the fear - in a general sense only; as I said, the team has not indicated that there is any diagnosis one way or another - and Andrews has done Tommy John surgery on three current A's pitchers. Anderson did have elbow inflammation twice last year, though, and it could be the same thing again; it's the same time of year, similar results with his pitches, etc.

Is this team now playing for the future rather than this year? I don't think that's the case; I believe it's really circumstances at this point. The team is seven games out and it's not yet mid-June. I wouldn't be surprised at all if they've talked about moving some players (Josh Willingham's name is definitely out there) but I'd be very surprised if he went anywhere unless the A's can't come out of this funk this month. I don't see Billy Beane pulling the plug in early June no matter how many injuries they've absorbed, or even if Anderson does need Tommy John surgery.

Hideki Matsui's future is cloudy, but the A's don't really know if he's got anything left unless he gets at least one more stretch of regular play to see if he can get going. I asked manager Bob Geren today if he could see getting Matsui in for a decent stretch to see if he comes around, and he said, "I do, I do. That's a good possibility." When I asked if Matsui is likely to sit again tomorrow night against lefty Mark Buehrle, Geren said not necessarily. Considering Matsui is a lifetime .188 hitter against Buehrle, seems like that would not be the best night to try to get Matsui back on track.

So might Matsui get this series in Chicago to play consecutively? Longer? If he falls flat, is this the end of the line? I don't know if his history of hitting in the second half will be enough to keep him in an Oakland uniform if he doesn't start hitting soon. I know the Japanese reporters all worry that the end will be soon.

Geren also said he's considering moving Cliff Pennington into the second spot in the order and moving Daric Barton back down to sixth, where Barton did a nice job over the weekend. But, Geren emphasized, if Barton does well in the second spot, he'd rather leave him there. He really, really likes Barton in the two-hole.

Guess where he is today? Here's the lineup behind Josh Outman: Crisp cf, Barton 1b, Jackson lf, Willingham dh, Suzuki c, DeJesus rf, Rosales 3b, Pennington ss, Weeks 2b.

The A's took Geren's son, Brett, in the draft today, and they also took agent Scott Boras' son, Shane. Brett Geren, a catcher, will play at Princeton next year, but Shane Boras, who is at USC, is expected to sign with the A's. No, all you jokesters, it will not be for an enormous sum and massive signing bonus.

If you usually get your A's information in the morning paper, for some reason my final game story didn't make it in. This is it.

Key prospect Jemile Weeks debuts in A's loss, as team looks for spark

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Jemile Weeks made his big-league debut Tuesday night at Camden Yards, and even though his night was as quiet as the rest of the A's, it was still a chance for fans to get a look at one of Oakland's top prospects.

Weeks, the 24-year-old brother of Milwaukee second baseman Rickie Weeks, was Oakland's first-round pick in 2008, 12th overall. He was called up when Mark Ellis was placed on the disabled list with a right hamstring strain, and he did not reach base in the A's 4-0 loss to Baltimore.

The A's have dropped eight in a row, extending their season high, and they have scored five runs, total, over their past three games. Oakland had beaten Baltimore in each of their previous eight series.

The last-place club is in danger of becoming deadly dull. Oakland's top attribute is its starting pitching, which has taken a dip in the past week-plus. And Tuesday, the A's put Brett Anderson on the DL - the team's fifth starter out of action this year.

The arrival of a prize prospect such as Weeks could provide a spark of interest. He's an energetic player, as is Adam Rosales, who came off the DL the day before, and an injection of energy might be just what the A's need. Another new player, Scott Sizemore, has hit in both games since being called up.

"We are struggling right now," Oakland starter Guillermo Moscoso said. "But we have a couple of new guys who are going to help this team a lot. We'll take advantage of that."

Weeks said that his brother told him to "just go out there and get after it, get that first hit." Weeks' parents, Richard and Valeria, were on hand on Tuesday, along with Weeks' sister, Kaisha.

After going 0-for-4, Weeks said he needs to harness the excitement of playing in the majors, but he's sure he'll feel more comfortable tonight with a more normal day of activity.

This is likely to be just a fill-in situation for Weeks, though he is considered the A's second baseman of the future. Asked if Weeks would have a shot at sticking if he excels now, A's manager Bob Geren said making any sort of statement would be unfair, but, he said, "Mark is a great player who is just injured right now."

Ellis wasn't altogether thrilled with going onto the DL. The longest-tenured A's player said that he believes his injury would heal in a matter of a few days and it's not as severe as a similar injury he had last year.

"But when you don't have enough bodies, sometimes someone has to go on the disabled list," he said.

Moscoso allowed two runs, both on homers, including a monster shot by Luke Scott onto Eutaw Street on the fifth. Working on two days' rest, Moscoso had the rotation's best outing of the past eight games; A's starters have a 7.20 ERA during the skid, and Oakland's hitters are batting .217.

Unable to back Outman, A's skid hits nine

Lefty gives up three runs, all on back-to-back pitches in fifth

By Jeff Seidel / Special to MLB.com | 6/8/2011 11:24 PM ET

BALTIMORE -- The A's shut down Baltimore's offense for much of Wednesday's game at Oriole Park. But what happened on two consecutive pitches kept Oakland's losing streak alive and left the frustrated A's once again looking for answers afterward.

Oakland starter Josh Outman gave up an RBI single to J.J. Hardy in the fifth inning, followed by a two-run homer to Mark Reynolds on the next pitch, and that was enough for the Orioles to hand the A's their ninth straight loss, 3-2, in the finale of a three-game series before 11,760 on a muggy 96-degree night.

This is the team's longest losing streak since the A's dropped 10 in a row from July 28-Aug. 7, 2008. Oakland fell to 27-36 as the O's completed the sweep.

The A's are 0-6 on this 10-game road trip. They've dropped three straight games in both Boston and Baltimore (29-31). It's also the first time the A's have been swept by the Orioles since Aug. 15-17, 2005.

"They outscored us, and they outpitched us and they outhit us, and that equals losses," said A's manager Bob Geren.

The main problem came in the fifth. Baltimore had only three baserunners in the other seven innings, but the Orioles were able to do just enough damage against Outman (1-1), who threw six solid innings.

Outman cruised through the first four innings before Vladimir Guerrero singled to start the fifth and moved to second on a wild pitch with two outs and Hardy up. Hardy then singled to center to score Guerrero. Reynolds belted a two-run homer on the following pitch for a 3-0 lead, which helped the Orioles complete the sweep -- after dropping three in a row in Oakland in late May.

"We were real frustrated coming out of Oakland, and to be able to kind of return the favor here, I know it felt real good for our guys," said Baltimore manager Buck Showalter.

It didn't feel good for the A's, who are trying to find ways to snap their skid. They got good defense and strong pitching in the finale. The offense still didn't generate much, but the A's hit some balls hard.

They just didn't get the desired results, and that's why those two pitches in the Baltimore fifth proved so crucial.

In the ninth, Kurt Suzuki and David DeJesus hit shots, but were denied hits by second baseman Robert Andino. Pinch-hitter Ryan Sweeney battled closer Kevin Gregg through a nine-pitch at-bat before grounding back to the pitcher to end the game.

"It's just a matter of time," Outman said. "When you're bad, you're bad, and when you're good, you're good. One of these days, it's going turn around and those hard-hit balls are going to fall in, and we're probably going to go on a nine-game winning streak."

Rookie Jemile Weeks wound up being the top story for the A's. Weeks went 2-for-3 with two runs scored and reached base all three times in his second Major League game.

He got his first Major League hit on a double to left off Baltimore starter Zach Britton (6-4) in the third. Weeks singled and later scored in the sixth on a Daric Barton double-play grounder to make it 3-1 and end a 19-inning scoreless streak.

Weeks then reached on left fielder Nolan Reimold's three-base error in the eighth and scored on Coco Crisp's sacrifice fly off Jim Johnson. The only negative was that Weeks got shaken up for a moment after jamming his neck after colliding with third baseman Reynolds following Reimold's error. But Weeks said he was fine afterward and glad to get that first hit.

"It was a good feeling," said Weeks. "I'm excited. This is something that I hope I can do all season and as long as I'm here."

Oakland couldn't do much against Britton, Johnson or Gregg. Britton gave up just one run on four hits in 6 1/3 innings. Johnson allowed an unearned run in 1 2/3 innings while Gregg breezed through the ninth for his 12th save. The A's scored just four runs in this entire series.

Oakland moves on to face the White Sox on Thursday in Chicago, where the club will hope to break out. Geren said he likes how hard his team has played even throughout the recent struggles and hopes everything changes soon.

"The guys are giving me everything they have," Geren said. "The effort's never been a problem, and I don't ever anticipate it being one."

A's bolster system with college arms in Draft

Of 21 pitchers selected, only three from high-school level

By Tom Green / MLB.com
OAKLAND -- When the A's selected Sonny Gray with their first-round pick Monday, they set a tone for the rest of their Draft. After taking the right-handed Vanderbilt ace, the club built up quite a collection of arms on the final two days of the First-Year Player Draft.

Of the club's 49 selections over the three-day event, Oakland drafted 21 pitchers, including 13 righties to fill out the staffs in their farm system. Leading the charge, of course, was Gray, who compiled an 11-3 record with a 2.01 ERA in 16 starts this season.

"He's a super competitor -- an ultra competitor," A's scouting director Eric Kubota said. "He's got plus stuff across the board and we've seen a lot of him over the years. He's got great makeup. We've liked Sonny for a long time."

Among the other notable right-handed arms the A's added to their farm system is South Dakota State's Blake Treinen, who was selected in the seventh round a year removed from being drafted in the 23rd round by the Marlins. As a senior, the 6-foot-4, 215-pound Treinen went 7-3 with a 3.00 ERA in 13 starts. He averaged one strikeout per frame in 84 innings and had a 1.26 WHIP.

First-round selections

No.	Team	Player
1	PIT	RHP Gerrit Cole
2	SEA	LHP Danny Hultzen
3	ARI	RHP Trevor Bauer
4	BAL	RHP Dylan Bundy
5	KC	OF Bubba Starling
6	WAS	3B Anthony Rendon
7	ARI	RHP Archie Bradley
8	CLE	SS Francisco Lindor

No.	Team	Player
9	CHC	SS Javier Baez
10	SD	2B Cory Spangenberg
11	HOU	OF George Springer
12	MIL	RHP Taylor Jungmann
13	NYM	OF Brandon Nimmo
14	FLA	RHP Jose Fernandez
15	MIL	LHP Jed Bradley
16	LAD	LHP Chris Reed
17	LAA	1B C.J. Cron
18	OAK	RHP Sonny Gray
19	BOS	RHP Matt Barnes
20	COL	LHP Tyler Anderson
21	TOR	RHP Tyler Beede
22	STL	2B Kolten Wong
23	WAS	RHP Alex Meyer
24	TB	RHP Taylor Guerrieri
25	SD	RHP Joe Ross
26	BOS	C Blake Swihart
27	CIN	RHP Robert Stephenson
28	ATL	LHP Sean Gilmartin
29	SF	SS Joe Panik
30	MIN	< > SS Levi Michael
31	TB	OF Mookie Betts
32	TB	SS Jake Hager
33	TEX	LHP Kevin Matthews

CWS, DET, NYY and PHI did not have first-round selections.

"At that point, he was the best player available," Kubota said. "He's got good stuff. We feel good about him."

The A's stuck to their philosophy and primarily went with college arms over high school pitchers, selecting just three hurlers out of high school, all of whom are lefties. Of the three, two came on the third day and the other was Jace Fry, who the A's drafted in the ninth round out of Southridge (Ore.) High School. He struck out 92 in 59 innings as a senior, with a 1.42 ERA.

While the arms dominated the A's Draft, the story early on Day 2 was power. With their first two picks Tuesday, they selected two hitters who Kubota believes have the potential to be power bats as they come up in the farm system.

In the third round, they drafted Bryan Anthony Vollmuth, who played third base and shortstop at Southern Mississippi University. Vollmuth led the Golden Eagles with 12 home runs and 49 RBIs this season while batting .301.

The following round, they snagged outfielder Bobby Crocker from Cal Poly. The A's drafted Crocker out of high school in 2008 and have a long history of scouting him. Crocker's numbers weren't as impressive, but Kubota believes the potential is there.

"We've scouted him a lot," Kubota said. "He's big, physical and athletic. There's a lot to like about him. He's strong, but hasn't hit a lot of power yet in his collegiate career. But we think there's definitely strength there to develop power."

The two early Day 2 selections also marked the beginning of a trend for the A's, who added a total of 11 outfielders to their system and addressed needs on the left side of the infield by drafting four third basemen and seven shortstops.

They also drafted a name on the other side of the infield that should sound familiar among baseball fans. In the 39th round, the team selected Shane Bieber, the son of renowned agent Scott Boras -- whose clientele includes Alex Rodriguez, Matt Holliday, Carlos Beltran and countless other Major Leaguers.

Shane Boras, who played second base at Southern California, was the second Boras to be drafted this year, joining his younger brother, Trent, who was selected by the Brewers on Tuesday.

Later on in Day 3 the A's drafted another name even more familiar to the franchise when they selected Brett Geren, the son of Oakland manager Bob Geren. The younger Geren, a catcher like his father, was picked in the 42nd round (No. 1,276 overall) out of San Ramon Valley High School in Danville, Calif.

"I haven't gotten a chance to speak to him because he was where he should be, in class taking his finals," the A's skipper said. "I'm sure when he finds out, he'll be very honored by that and excited."

Oakland also selected outfielder Jeriel Waller, the nephew of first-base coach Tye Waller, in the 47th round.

In all, the A's drafted 21 pitchers, 11 outfielders, four third basemen, seven shortstops, four catchers and two second basemen. Of all their selections, 14 were out of high school, including eight of their last 10.

"We feel good," Kubota said. "We feel good every year. We're very pleased with how things turned out. We feel we've got a good group of players to put into the Minor League system."

Cahill, A's try to halt skid vs. Buehrle, White Sox

By Quinn Roberts / Special to MLB.com | 6/8/2011 11:18 PM ET

In the middle of a rough 10-game road trip, the A's head for Chicago on Thursday to face the White Sox, having lost nine straight.

Tied for first place in the American League West on May 17, the A's are a season-high eight games under .500.

We need to play better," Oakland manager Bob Geren said. "First pitch on -- every single inning."

Trevor Cahill, the A's most durable starter this season, will hope to get his club back on track in his third start against the White Sox this season.

Struggling of late, Cahill is 0-3 with a 4.13 ERA over his last five starts since going 6-0 with a 1.72 ERA over his first eight starts.

Against the Red Sox in his last start, the right-hander went seven innings, giving up a season-high five runs on eight hits. Taking a no-decision, Cahill stayed at 6-3 with a 2.65 ERA.

Chicago will counter with Mark Buehrle, who has begun to hit his stride.

The left-hander has given up three runs or fewer and thrown six innings or more in his last seven starts, with a 4-2 record during that span.

On Friday against the Tigers, Buehrle gave up three runs on 10 hits in six innings for the win. He also walked only one and struck out four to move to 5-4 with a 3.95 ERA.

Making a push for first place in the AL Central, the White Sox believe behind the pitching of Buehrle and the rest of their starters, they can get there. Coming into Thursday's series opener against the A's, the White Sox are six games back of the Indians.

"We think we're in it," White Sox general manager Kenny Williams said. "The reason why is because we've got pitching. And when you have pitching in the American League, you can compete on a day-to-day basis."

Athletics: Weeks get first career hit

- Making his Major League debut in Tuesday's game, Jemile Weeks got his first hit Wednesday, a double to left field in the third inning.

Weeks finished 2-for-3 with a double and two runs scored.

"Just to be out there on the field was something I pretty much dreamed of all my life, and to be able to be out there was a feeling I really can't explain," Weeks said after Tuesday's game. "That first at-bat or two, I had the jitters a little bit, but I got over it later on in the game."

- Coming into Wednesday's game, the A's had committed 45 errors, the second-highest number in the American League.

White Sox: Peavy to DL

Before Wednesday's game against the Seattle Mariners, Chicago placed right-hander Jake Peavy on the 15-day disabled list with a strained right groin and recalled right-hander Lucas Harrell from Triple-A Charlotte.

In five starts, Peavy is 2-1 with a 4.66 ERA and 20 strikeouts. He left Sunday's start against Detroit after four innings.

"[It's] disappointing, no doubt," Peavy said Tuesday. "I was feeling good and beginning to climb with my arm."

Worth noting

- In 10 games with Charlotte, Harrell went 4-3 with a 3.25 ERA and 49 strikeouts. Pitching in eight games for the Sox in 2010, he went 1-0 with a 4.88 ERA.
- Cahill and Buehrle faced off May 15, with Cahill taking his first loss of the year and Buehrle getting the win.
- In three career starts at U.S. Cellular Field, Cahill is 0-0 with a 6.08 ERA.

Godfrey to make Major League debut Friday

Taking Anderson's spot, righty to face White Sox

By Jeff Seidel / Special to MLB.com

BALTIMORE -- Right-hander Graham Godfrey will make his Major League debut on Friday when he starts for the A's in Chicago against the White Sox.

Oakland manager Bob Geren said before Wednesday's game in Baltimore that Godfrey will take the injured Brett Anderson's spot on Friday. The 26-year old Godfrey will come up from Triple-A Sacramento.

Godfrey, a 6-foot-3, 205-pound righty, is 7-1 with a 2.50 ERA this season in nine starts. He's won his last three starts.

"He's pitching very well down there," Geren said. "He's the highest strike-percentage guy they have, throws a lot of strikes, good changeup."

Anderson just went on to the 15-day disabled list Tuesday (elbow soreness), which opened up that place in the rotation.

There was no immediate word on the corresponding move the A's will make to open up a roster spot for Godfrey.

Plenty of talent rising through A's system

Weeks latest Oakland prospect to make big league debut

By Tom Green / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Another First-Year Player Draft in the books, and the A's farm system has been restocked with hand-picked talent. The new draftees will join the Minors, where several of the team's picks from recent years are still working their way up to the Majors -- and some of them will get there sooner rather than later.

Of the top-10 players in the A's system, seven were drafted in the last three years, one of whom, Jemile Weeks, was recently called up to Oakland. Weeks, drafted in the first round (No. 12 overall) in 2008 out of the University of Miami, made his Major League debut Tuesday after A's second baseman Mark Ellis hit the 15-day disabled list.

Weeks, 24, is MLB.com's No. 8 prospect at second base despite battling injuries in his first years out of college. He played in fewer than 80 games each of his first two seasons, but the speedy switch-hitting infielder was batting .321 in 45 games for Triple-A Sacramento this season before getting called up to Oakland. In his debut against the Orioles on Tuesday, Weeks went 0-for-4 in the leadoff role as the A's were blanked, 4-0. He collected his first career hit Wednesday, a double in the third inning.

While Weeks was the first of Oakland's top prospects to make it to the Majors, he's only No. 5 on the board. The top player in the team's farm system is still playing Double-A ball for the Midland Rockhounds. Grant Green was selected 13th overall in 2009 and had a solid first season playing shortstop in the Minors. That season, he hit .318 with a .520 slugging percentage while launching 20 home runs and driving in 87 runs.

This year for the Rockhounds, the 23-year-old Green is hitting .294 in 48 games with 12 doubles and 27 RBIs. He has struck out 44 times and his plate discipline could use some work. Although he is playing shortstop now, by the time he makes it to the Majors -- which could be as soon as next season -- he could become a second baseman with solid offensive numbers.

Behind Green on the A's list of top prospects is 24-year-old Chris Carter, a power-hitting first baseman who can also play outfielder. Carter was part of the package with left-handed pitcher Brett Anderson that the A's got from the D-backs for Dan Haren. Carter, with the A's Triple-A team in Sacramento, is on a rehab assignment, but could get called up to the A's later this season.

The third-best prospect in the A's system, Michael Choice, is still a ways away from making his Major League debut. Choice, the club's top selection in last year's Draft, is with the club's Stockton affiliate and isn't expected to be called up until at least 2013. However, Choice, an outfielder, was considered one of the most impactful hitters in last year's Draft. This year, he has shown it, notching 26 extra-base hits in 54 games. He strikes out a lot, but also draws plenty of walks.

After three solid offensive prospects comes the top pitcher in the A's farm system -- Ian Krol. Drafted in the seventh round out of high school two years ago, Krol has shown the advanced ability that has drawn him comparisons to a college southpaw. He led the entire Oakland system with a 2.80 ERA last year, but has been sidelined this year by a forearm strain, putting his move to the California League on hold for the time being.

The 23-year-old lefty has good location with all three of his pitches, as he walked only 28 in 138 1/3 innings last year. If he keeps on locating his pitches and stays healthy, Krol could find himself located in Oakland by 2013.

A's woes continue with 9th consecutive loss

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BALTIMORE — Oakland manager Bob Geren didn't get too philosophical in trying to explain why the Athletics absorbed a three-game sweep at the hands of the Baltimore Orioles.

"They outscored us, they outpitched us, they outhit us," Geren said. "That equals losses."

Rookie Zach Britton took a four-hitter into the seventh inning, Mark Reynolds homered, and the Orioles beat the A's 3-2 on Wednesday night to stretch Oakland's losing streak to nine.

The Athletics haven't won since outscoring Baltimore 16-8 during a three-game sweep on May 27-29. In the rematch at Camden Yards, Oakland scored only four runs in three games and never held the lead.

"The first series with them we didn't hit in certain situations and we didn't make key pitches in certain situations," Orioles closer Kevin Gregg said. "We really gave away three games to them at their place. Here, we played the game right."

And Oakland did not. The A's got only 17 hits in the series and scored three earned runs.

"The offense has been hitting the ball real good, but balls have been caught," A's starter Josh Outman said. "We can't buy a hit."

The trio of defeats left the Athletics mired in their longest slide since a 10-game skid in 2008.

"It's the way the game goes," Outman said. "Once we get a couple wins, we'll get our swagger back and will get back some of our confidence."

A's second baseman Jemile Weeks went 2 for 3 and scored both Oakland runs. The former first-round draft pick went hitless in his major-league debut Tuesday night.

"I am excited. This is something I hope to do all season as long as I am here," Weeks said. "This is what they want to see from me, and it's what I do."

Said Geren: "He's exciting. That's what the fans are going to see: A guy that will bring energy and excitement to the team. ... He's an exciting player. That's why you pick someone No.1 in the draft, to get that kind of talent level.

"He was a big factor in the game tonight. I wish he had batted one more time."

Still, Oakland suffered its first three-game sweep in Baltimore since July 21-23, 1998.

Britton (6-4) allowed four hits and two walks in 6« innings. The left-hander, who tied his career high with six strikeouts, had been 0-3 in six starts since May 1.

Asked to assess his performance, Britton said, "I thought it was pretty good, obviously better than the previous couple outings."

Jim Johnson gave up an unearned run in 1» innings. Gregg worked a perfect ninth for his 12th save.

Baltimore got all its runs in the fifth inning against Outman (1-1). Vladimir Guerrero hit a leadoff single, advanced on a two-out wild pitch and scored on a single by J.J. Hardy. Reynolds followed with his 10th home run.

"Hardy did a good job of staying back on a 3-2 changeup and Reynolds got the first pitch," Outman said. "It was down and away from him and he went out and got it."

Oakland ended a string of 19 straight scoreless innings in the sixth. After singles by Weeks and Coco Crisp put runners at the corners with no outs, Daric Barton hit into a 4-6-3 double play.

The A's closed to 3-2 in the eighth. Left fielder Nolan Reimold misjudged a line drive by Weeks for a three-base error and Crisp followed with a sacrifice fly.

Oakland made two exceptional fielding plays in the early going. Crisp tracked down a liner to deep center by Guerrero, and shortstop Cliff Pennington dived deep in the hole to snare a grounder before rising to his feet and throwing out Hardy.

"The guys made some great defensive plays out there," Geren said. "The guys are giving me great effort. Effort has never been a problem and I don't ever anticipate it being a problem."

Backed with that kind of defensive support and aided by a double play, Outman faced the minimum 12 batters through four innings.

But Baltimore broke open the scoreless duel in the fifth.

Outman allowed three runs and five hits in six innings. Oakland starters are 0-8 with a 6.88 ERA during the nine-game losing streak.

NOTES: Oakland's 14-24 record in night games is worst in the AL.

Oakland INF Andy LaRoche, who was designated for assignment on Sunday, cleared waivers and was outrighted to Triple-A Sacramento.

Gutierrez: Weeks offers reeling A's silver lining

Paul Gutierrez, CSNCalifornia.com

You better not have blinked while looking for a silver lining in the A's ninth straight loss of the season Wednesday night in Oakland's 3-2 loss in Baltimore. Otherwise, as the saying goes, you might have missed Jemile Weeks.

The 5-feet-9, 160 pound (soaking wet and with rocks in his pockets) Weeks was all over the field in his second career major league game. He had a single, a double and, if the official scorekeeper was in a more magnanimous mood, he would have had a triple, too.

The second baseman also scored two runs - the A's *only* two runs and turned a nifty double-play in which he deftly backhanded Adam Jones' grounder up the middle, touched the bag to force out Nick Markakis and gained his balance in time to throw across his body to get Jones at first.

This is what the A's, no doubt, envisioned, when they drafted him with the No. 12 overall pick in 2008 out of Miami. Not what he showed Tuesday in his first big league at-bat.

Called up from Triple-A Sacramento, where he was absolutely raking the ball at a .321 clip with a .417 on-base percentage, to help out with Mark Ellis going on the disabled list with a strained right hamstring, Weeks was put in the lead-off spot.

In his first-ever at-bat, Weeks watched not one. Not two. Not three or even four pitches go by without so much as lifting his bat off his shoulders. He looked at five - *five!* - pitches and, yes, struck out looking. *Looking!*

Maybe it was nerves. Maybe it was part of his master plan. Either way, the A's wanted him for his aggressiveness, in every aspect of the game.

Dropped to No. 9 in the lineup Wednesday, he showed it in his first at-bat, jumping on a 90-mph fastball from Zach Britton and driving the 2-and-0 offering into the left-fielder corner for a one-out double in the third inning, Weeks' first career hit.

In the sixth, he led off the inning with a single to left, moved to third on Coco Crisp's single to center and scored on Daric Barton's 4-6-3 double-play, Week's first career run scored.

And in the eighth, his drive to left was lost in the Camden Yards lights by Nolan Reimold for what was ruled a three-base error. And despite jamming his neck in Orioles third baseman Mark Reynolds', ahem, nether region on his late-breaking head-first slide, Weeks stayed in the game. He scored one batter later on Crisp's sac fly to center, Week's second career run scored.

Yes, Weeks is still looking for his first career victory. He already has his first career silver lining.

Eight straight losses now and more injuries: same old Athletics?

Sam McPherson, examiner.com, 6/8/2011

What can be said about the 2011 Oakland Athletics now?

They keep losing, both games and players to injury.

Nothing new for a franchise that has been in the gutter since current owner Lew Wolff took over the team in 2006.

Why should anything change now?

This week has been a busy one: the A's lost Monday and Tuesday in Baltimore, and the team also drafted 29 new players in the Major League Baseball 2011 First-Year Player Draft -- but if the recent past is any indication, they'll probably just get injured.

That may sound incredibly unfair, but the Oakland organization has experienced a surprising number of injuries in the past five seasons -- and that has to represent a problem of the current ownership's management approach and style.

Starting pitcher Brett Anderson hit the disabled list yesterday, along with second baseman Mark Ellis. With Anderson out, the A's have now lost three-fifths of their Opening Day rotation already -- not to mention sixth starter Tyson Ross, who is also on the DL.

Ellis has been terrible this year, anyway, and with his injury, the A's are finally giving prospect Jemile Weeks a shot at the major-league roster -- perhaps a long overdue decision.

With the eight straight losses and no end to the freefall in sight, Oakland needs to start playing for the future -- which also means trading away some semi-valuable parts they have on the roster: overpriced veterans like Grant Balfour, Brian Fuentes, Hideki Matsui, etc.

So hang on, A's fans -- it's just going to get worse now, as the organization should probably blow up this roster as soon as possible.

And that means a lot more losses, but Oakland is used to that now. Sadly, after five playoff appearances from 2000 to 2006, the A's haven't finished over .500 since.

So Wolff really needs to decide if he truly wants to own a major-league franchise -- attendance is down, the team is performing at its worst levels in 15 years, and the stadium issue is extremely problematic.

It often seems like he doesn't even care.

Now, another season of such potential promise has gone south in a hurry, so now it's back to the drawing board.

A's fans have heard this line before, though, so don't blame them for not drinking Wolff's Kool-Aid much longer. Sooner or later, you have to produce results or just step aside.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

First-place River Cats heat up with temperature

By Zeke Fine / Sacramento River Cats

The Sacramento River Cats enter their June 9-12 homestand against the Tacoma Rainiers playing their highest level of baseball all season. Sacramento has won six of seven games, bringing them to a record of 39-21. The River Cats have the Pacific Coast League's best record and have a six-game lead over Las Vegas in the Pacific South Division.

The Rainiers have had some difficulties so far this season. The reigning Pacific Coast League Champions have a record of 26-34, putting them in fourth place in the Pacific North Division and 10.0 games out of first place.

Fortunately, the Rainiers will not be bringing their local weather with them, as all signs point toward a warm weekend in Sacramento, bringing mid-80s temperatures to Raley Field. This should set the stage for some great conditions for both players and fans alike.

Leading Sacramento on the hill recently has been right-hander Graham Godfrey (7-1, 2.50). The River Cats' ace leads the PCL in both wins and ERA, and has earned the win in his last three starts. He threw 6.0 innings, allowing one earned run while collecting four strikeouts in his last start against Colorado Springs on June 4. Anchoring the bullpen has been Willie Eyre (3-2, 1.82). He has converted his last five save opportunities and has thrown five consecutive scoreless innings.

The River Cats have been equally impressive with the bat. Bolstering the Sacramento offense has been catcher Anthony Recker. Recker has a 17-game hitting streak and hit his 11th home run in Tuesday's loss.

Recker hasn't been the only River Cat with a hot bat. Jai Miller has been a force in the middle of the lineup. Miller hit his team-leading 13th home run June 5 against Colorado Springs.

The Rainiers have a number of players who have had terrific individual seasons thus far. Designated hitter Mike Carp has a 21-game hitting streak through Sunday. As of June 5, Carp is tied for first in the PCL with 17 home runs and 15th in batting average with a .341 clip.

The Rainiers' lineup also features a top prospect in second baseman Dustin Ackley. The former North Carolina Tar Heel was selected second overall by the Seattle Mariners in the 2009 draft. Coming into the 2011 season, he was Baseball America's 12th ranked prospect. So far this season, Ackley has hit .294 with eight home runs. This series will be the Rainiers' final trip to Sacramento this season, and possibly Ackley's final trip to Raley field, as he is likely to be called up to Seattle at some point this season.

The series begins Thursday, June 9, at 7:05 p.m. at Raley Field. Left-hander Lenny DiNardo is scheduled to start for the River Cats.

Controversial home run puts Hooks over 'Hounds

Jordan Mason, Midland Reporter-Telegram

A controversial eighth-inning home run proved to be the difference Wednesday as the Corpus Christi Hooks defeated the Midland RockHounds 3-2 in the series opener at Citibank Ballpark.

The loss was the 10th straight for Midland in games decided by one run.

"Very frustrating," said Midland manager Steve Scarsone. "We're working hard, and those are the ones you need."

The RockHounds (23-34) erased a 2-0 deficit and were tied at two in the top of the eighth when Hooks third baseman Jimmy Paredes went up 2-0 in the count to lead off the inning.

Paredes saw a fastball outside on the next pitch and lifted it toward the foul pole in left.

The ball left the park and after a second, third base umpire Matt Benham ruled the ball fair and a home run.

RockHounds shortstop Grant Green began arguing heatedly with Benham and was tossed from the game. Minutes later Scarsone was tossed by home plate umpire Brian Hertzog for arguing as well.

"It probably escalated more than it needed to," Scarsone said. "But frustration does that to you sometimes."

Paredes said he didn't even see the ball after the game while Scarsone maintained his position.

"Everybody's got their opinion," Scarsone said. "My opinion is that that ball was foul."

The play was one of many controversial ones in the game.

Corpus Christi (21-36) was leading 1-0 in the top of the second when Van Ostrand drove a ball to right center that center fielder Jermaine Mitchell dove to catch.

It was ruled, however, that Mitchell trapped the ball, and Hooks center fielder T.J. Steele scored while Van Ostrand rounded the bases to third for an RBI triple.

The RockHounds responded, though, erasing the 2-0 deficit on a Mitchell home run and a bizarre 5-6-4 double play that saw Green plow into Van Ostrand at first, allowing Tyler Ladendorf to score from second.

But Midland was unable to respond to the Paredes blast thanks largely to the late pitching of Hooks reliever Jonnathan Aristil, who allowed no hits in four innings of work to earn the win.

Scarsone said the close losses have been frustrating but that the team will continue to press forward to try to get over the hump.

"We'll just continue to go out there with a positive attitude," he said, "and try to get on top of those games."

'HOUND BITES: RockHounds center fielder Jermaine Mitchell continued his hot hitting Wednesday, going 2-for-4 with a walk and a home run. His shot to left in the third tied him with first baseman Michael Spina for the team lead in home runs with 10. ... The RockHounds lead last-place Corpus Christi by just two games in the Texas League South after Wednesday's loss. ... Wandy Rodriguez was mediocre in a Major League re-hab assignment, giving up six hits, including the home run to Mitchell, but only one earned run in four innings of work.

TODAY'S PROBABLES: Midland is expected to start Jason Bergmann (0-1, 21.60) today while Corpus Christi is expected to walk out Ross Seaton (2-3, 5.09).

Bees Blast 3 Home Runs and Win 9-7

By Gavin Halpin, Burlington Bees

BURLINGTON, IA-The Burlington Bees (41-19) scored three runs over three different innings to move past the South Bend Silver Hawks (30-29) 9-7 before 555 fans at Community Field Wednesday night.

For the second night in a row, the Silver Hawks scored first. A two run home-run by DH Yazy Arbelo (1-3) in the top of the first inning gave the visitors a 2-0 lead.

In the bottom of the first inning the Bees stung Silver Hawks RHP J.R. Bradley (2-8) for three runs. After a leadoff double by RF Royce Consigli (2-3), a two run home-run to left field by LF Douglas Landaeta (2-5) knotted the score up at 2-2. DH Josh Whitaker (2-4) blasted a solo home-run to center field to give the Bees the 3-2 lead.

A solo home-run by SS Zach Walters (1-5) off of Bees starter Tyler Vail (1-2) and an RBI single by LF Chris Jarrett (2-4) gave the Silver Hawks two runs and the lead at 4-3 in the third inning.

Bees 1B A.J. Kirby-Jones (3-4) got into the home-run action, blasting a two run shot over the right field wall to give the Bees the lead again at 5-4 in the fourth inning. Later on in the inning the Bees extended their lead to 6-4 after a single by Consigli scored CF Tyreace House (0-3).

The Silver Hawks were able to muster one run in the fifth inning after a single by 3B Matt Helm (1-5) scored 2B Mike Freeman (1-4) for a 6-5 score.

The scoring arsenal for the Bees continued in the fifth inning. The Bees recorded three hits, three walks, and three runs to extend their lead to 9-5.

South Bend scored two runs in the eighth inning to cut the lead down to 9-7. This set up a save situation for RHP Daniel Tenholder, who worked a scoreless ninth inning to pick up his eighth save.

The Bees and South Bend Silver Hawks will finish off their three-game series on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. It's "Thirsty Thursday" at Community Field, a tradition where fans can enjoy 2 for \$3 deals on Pepsi Products and 2 for \$4.50 deals on select beer sponsored by the Mark Warth Agency and The New Mix 107.3. LHP David Holmberg (5-3, 3.14) gets the start for the Silver Hawks against RHP Jose Macias (1-0, 3.46) for the Bees.