

## **A's Daily News Clips, Tuesday, November 8, 2011**

### **Mercury News editorial: Land sale option for a San Jose ballpark isn't a city giveaway**

San Jose Mercury News editorial, 11/8/2011

We're about ready to give up on the hapless Bud Selig ever deciding to allow the Oakland A's to move to San Jose. But team owner Lew Wolff and San Jose have not given up, so Tuesday the city council will consider granting Wolff an option to buy the land the city has acquired so far for a downtown ballpark.

The proposed purchase option is for \$6.9 million, half the current appraised value and far less than San Jose paid to buy the land and relocate tenants. So there's some grumbling. But if Major League Baseball rejects the A's move, Wolff's purchase option dies; it's only valid if he builds a stadium. And if Selig wakes up and approves the move, San Jose voters will get to decide whether to complete the deal. There will be no avoiding a ballot measure.

It's natural to want the city to get a good price for land, given the punishing budget deficits that are shredding public services. But this is an economic development deal. San Jose bought this land for a ballpark, which will create jobs, spark the downtown economy and make Silicon Valley more attractive to business. The additional tax revenue should quickly exceed the amount lost because of the lower land price.

Might offices or some other use bring in better jobs in the long run? Sure. But holding out for the "highest and best" -- that is, the most profitable -- use of the land might result in its lying fallow for decades, like the many other prime downtown sites that are now parking lots. If a ballpark goes on the ballot, the choice may be between construction cranes rising in the near future and nothing at all for decades.

If a ballpark is rejected, whether by Selig or San Jose voters, then Wolff will forfeit his option to purchase the land. So the decision on the council agenda Tuesday is mostly about a message to Selig: Yo! Bud! San Jose has actual land for a ballpark! Unlike some other cities we know ...

We continue to be amazed that Major League Baseball is supporting the San Francisco Giants' claim on the South Bay as its territory -- a designation the team received only when it tried to move to San Jose in the 1990s. And we continue to believe baseball would be good for San Jose in ways both tangible and intangible.

If Wolff and the city think a land purchase option will help wake Selig up, fine. Voters will have the final say.

### **Willingham, Gio tabbed top A's by MLB.com**

#### **Rookie Weeks selected as Breakout Player of the Year**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Though Josh Willingham's stay in Oakland isn't likely to extend past the one-year mark, there's no denying the contributions he made both on and off the field during that time.

Willingham has been selected as MLB.com's Athletics Player of the Year. He handled the large confines of Oakland Coliseum just fine, tallying 15 home runs at home and 29 overall to go along with a team-leading 98 RBIs -- most by an A's player since Frank Thomas posted 114 in 2006.

As selected by MLB.com, awards have been designated in three categories -- Pitcher, Performer and Breakout Player -- for each of the 30 teams. Left-hander Gio Gonzalez and rookie Jemile Weeks also were honored.

Outside the Coliseum, Willingham and his wife, Ginger, utilized the Josh Willingham Foundation to focus their efforts on assisting local victims of the April tornadoes near their home in Alabama.

For that work, Willingham was named the A's nominee for the Roberto Clemente Award and, ultimately, the recipient of the Dave Stewart Community Service Award and the Jim "Catfish" Hunter Award, which for the past seven years has recognized the club's most inspirational player.

"Usually you just get a perspective on a guy on the field, and your interviews with him pertain a lot more to baseball, but obviously there's a lot more with this guy that meets the eye than just baseball-wise," A's manager Bob Melvin said this season.

In his first season at the helm, Melvin was also greeted by an inspirational cast of youngsters, among them Weeks -- named MLB.com's Athletics Breakout Player of the Year.

Weeks, who is also a nominee for American League Rookie of the Year and the annual Greatness in Baseball Yearly (GIBBY) Award for top rookie, christened his first season in the big leagues in fine fashion, pacing the A's in triples (eight), multi-hit games (35) and games of three hits or more (14).

Moreover, his team-leading .303 average ranked best among AL rookies with at least 400 plate appearances. The second baseman also tied for second among that same pack with 22 stolen bases and ranked third in hits (123) and doubles (26) in 97 games.

On the mound, Gonzalez's All-Star campaign earned him the nod as MLB.com's Athletics Pitcher of the Year -- an honor that follows a 2011 season that watched the lefty go 16-12 with a 3.12 ERA and 197 strikeouts in a career-high 202 innings.

### **AL rookie choices mixed bag of pitchers, hitters**

### **Hurlers Hellickson, Nova figure to be up against Trumbo for award**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

Identifying the best of this year's American League rookies is no simple task.

But it's one the Baseball Writers' Association of America will answer to soon, as its decision on the AL Rookie of the Year Award is set to be unveiled Nov. 14.

Though a clear-cut favorite is missing, the candidates are abundant.

Three freshman starters -- the Rays' Jeremy Hellickson, the Yankees' Ivan Nova and the Mariners' Michael Pineda -- each made a strong case to win the hardware. But several position players, including Mark Trumbo of the Angels and the Royals' Eric Hosmer, also stood out.

Already named the best among AL rookies by Baseball America, Hellickson is vying to become the second in Rays' history to win the Jackie Robinson Rookie of the Year award, following Evan Longoria in 2008, and the fourth pitcher to take home the honor in the past six years.

The 24-year-old has the credentials. Hellickson posted a 13-10 record and 2.95 ERA spanning 189 innings in 29 starts, 20 of which were quality starts. He led all Major League rookies in ERA, which was the lowest among qualifying AL rookies (based on a minimum 162 innings) since Kevin Appier compiled a 2.76 mark for the Royals in 1990.

Furthermore, Hellickson's .210 opponents' batting average ranked third in the Majors only behind Cy Young contenders Justin Verlander (.192) of the Tigers and Clayton Kershaw (.207) of the Dodgers.

But for those who value wins, Nova reigned supreme with 16, next to just four losses and a 3.70 ERA in 28 games, 27 of them starts, over 165 1/3 innings for the Yankees. He won his final 12 decisions, which included an eight-game winning streak.

Not to be lost in the shuffle is Pineda, who at midseason was the likely frontrunner. The hard-throwing Seattle right-hander, a member of the Mariners' rotation from the beginning of the season, carried seven wins and a 2.65 ERA into the month of July. A heavy workload affected his second-half numbers, though, as he earned just two wins, but he still managed to end the year with a 3.74 ERA over 171 innings.

Trumbo was the top choice in the league by the Sporting News. The 25-year-old first baseman took full advantage of his opportunity on the big league stage, following six years in the Minors, by hitting 29 home runs and driving in 87 runs. He batted .254, but his home-run total was the highest by an AL rookie since Nomar Garciaparra hit 30 for the Red Sox in 1997.

Trumbo also trumped all AL rookies in games played with 149, with fellow award candidate Hosmer playing in 128 after making his Major League debut on May 6. At age 21, Hosmer displayed tremendous power, smashing 19 home runs while driving in 78 runs and finishing first among AL rookies in runs (66) and hits (153). He also collected 27 doubles, making him the 27th player in history to hit at least 17 home runs and 24 doubles at the age of 21.

Flying under the radar, yet still worthy of consideration, are Mariners second baseman Dustin Ackley, A's second baseman Jemile Weeks, Angels reliever Jordan Walden, and two Blue Jays, third baseman Brett Lawrie and catcher J.P. Arencibia.

## Gomes' double sends Dogs over Saguaros

### Brazilian backstop helps Phoenix slow down first-place Surprise

By John Parker / Special to MLB.com

In a league known for its offensive displays, Phoenix's game at Surprise on Monday afternoon featured a relatively sedate seven total runs. No batters collected more than a single hit, but the most telling blow was a two-RBI double by Desert Dogs catcher Yan Gomes in the second inning as Phoenix edged the Saguaros, 4-3.

The Blue Jays prospect was a member of the Desert Dogs taxi squad, which limits him to just two games each week. Gomes' 13th game of the AFL campaign saw the backstop collect his second extra-base hit and his second and third RBIs. He's batting .214 with hits in each of his last three games.

"I was really just trying to get something to drive in the guy [on base]. I got a pitch to hit and it turned into a double," Gomes said. "I've kind of been trying to get it going and I just got a good pitch to swing at."

One of 26 Minor Leaguers born in Brazil, Gomes spent the bulk of the 2011 regular season with Double-A New Hampshire, where he batted .250 with 13 homers and 51 RBIs in 79 games. It was the second full season for the 24-year-old, whom the Blue Jays took out of Barry University in Florida with their 10th-round pick in the 2009 Draft.

After spending most of the fall campaign playing twice a week, Gomes was moved up to the regular roster last week. It's a welcome transition for the Brazilian.

"When you're only playing every three days, it makes it tough to get your timing down," Gomes said of being on the taxi squad. "It's definitely better more people get to see me play. It's a positive to get more at-bats and more playing time."

With just nine games left in the season, Gomes isn't overly concerning himself with results.

"It's always a good thing to have big numbers, but it's important to have good swings and finish strong," he said.

Surprise, which entered the game with the circuit's best record at 20-7, jumped out to an early lead in the first inning as Rangers prospect Mike Olt -- the reigning **AFL Player of the Week** -- clubbed a two-out, two-run shot, his league-leading ninth home run. The longball gave Olt sole possession of the RBI lead as well, with 32 in 19 games.

Phoenix answered in the top of the second as each of the first four batters reached base. Gomes drove in Corban Joseph and Rob Segedin (both of the Yankees) before scoring on a single by fellow Toronto farmhand Anthony Gose.

The Desert Dogs added a fourth run in the third when Chad Huffman (Indians) doubled and came home on a two-out hit by Segedin.

Both clubs' pitching staffs took over from there, with only an eighth-inning homer by the Saguaros' Kevin Mattison (Marlins) adding to the score.

Phoenix starter David Phelps (Yankees) improved to 1-2 after allowing a pair of runs on three hits over five solid frames. He struck out three and walked one. Indians bullpen prospect Cory Burns notched his first save with a scoreless ninth.

Alex Sanabia (Marlins) suffered his first defeat of the fall, falling to 2-1 after yielding four runs on six hits in 4 2/3 innings. He fanned four and walked four, his highest total in six AFL starts.

The loss put a dent in Surprise's efforts to post the best record in AFL history. The 1999 Mesa Solar Sox went 31-13 (.705); the Saguaros are now 20-8 (.714).

### Dave Newhouse: A journalist's words now fade away

By Dave Newhouse, Oakland Tribune Columnist

Words. Words. Words.

For 52 years, 47 of them at the Oakland Tribune, my life has been about seeking words -- an unrelenting search.

Interminable words. Descriptive words. Elusive words.

Now there are no more words left to say other than goodbye.

This is my final column, my farewell to journalism.

The time has come. This old school newspaperman, misplaced in a new world of texters, tweeters and bloggers, is exiting before the gigabytes start to bite.

It's customary in journalism, for some unfathomable reason, that when, say, a political writer retires, his career is marked by how many national conventions he attended or how many American presidents he interviewed.

Or, if he's a sports writer, how many Super Bowls, World Series, Kentucky Derbys or Olympic Games he has covered.

That's never been what it's about in journalism. It's deadlines and finding just the right words to make your story or column readable and relevant.

That other stuff -- big events, celebrities, superstars -- is nothing more than cupcakes stacked in a bakery storefront: window dressing.

Vocabulary consumes a journalist, taxes his verbal skills and beats him up if the perfect word comes to him, too late, after reading what he wrote in the morning paper.

That daily pressure can be excruciating, something a critical public doesn't always understand. Only journalists truly understand journalists in terms of commitment, courage and, most often, a moral sense.

But there will be no parole for this prisoner of words.

Other writing projects await me, with fewer deadlines and greater freedom. One needn't retire permanently, even at 73.

News of my leaving will be celebrated by Oakland A's ownership, now free from my carpings about its callous pursuit of San Jose. And the Warriors won't have to listen to my rants about changing their name to "Oakland."

The timing is right, regardless, for my departure. Still, how did all these years, and all those words, pass by so quickly? There is a profound sadness inside me now that it's all ending, because I've loved being a newspaperman.

The Oakland Tribune has been my workplace since May 1964, except for two years (1991-93) at the Contra Costa Times.

Thus it's comforting to hear that "Oakland" and "Contra Costa" will remain in the two mastheads, or flags.

It's been an honor to work with fellow Tribbies. They're slim in numbers, but they pack a punch.

And it's been an honor to write for you readers, and also about you. Your warm comments and harsh critiques have been welcomed. Well, certainly the former have.

Memorable moments? Unforgettable interviews? That's another attendant part of a journalist's swan song. As for personal highlights, they are too numerous for me to cram into one column.

But No. 1 would be Oakland's remarkable recovery from the 1991 fire. No city recovers from crises quite like Oakland. Occupy that thought for a moment.

Then there was Kirk Gibson's implausible Hobbesian home run off Dennis Eckersley in the 1988 World Series -- my greatest sports observance.

And seeing Willie Mays, Joe Montana and Jerry Rice play on the same field.

And let's not forget the Stanford marching band's inability to tackle.

Toughest interview: Transgender tennis player Renee Richards, the former Dr. Richard Raskind. My shirt was drenched with perspiration after that ordeal.

Another reason to step away: Too many obituaries to write involving Tribune colleagues.

Plus there is physical healing to deal with and family healing. Life goes on, but it doesn't become less demanding.

However, my walking away this week with Tony La Russa seems perfect, for he just managed my boyhood team, the St. Louis Cardinals, to the most improbable World Series championship ever. Hopefully, it registered fully with my first hero, Cardinal icon Stan "The Man" Musial.

How special it's been, too, to write about two great universities, UC Berkeley and Stanford, and the most picturesque of small campuses, St. Mary's College.

Lastly, to paraphrase a famous general: Old journalists never die, their words just fade away.

But, first, these words to live by: Love newspapers.