

## A's News Clips, Wednesday, April 28, 2010

### Oakland A's Ben Sheets lit up by Tampa Bay Rays, and Brett Anderson goes on DL

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's hardly got the performance they needed from Ben Sheets on Tuesday night at Tropicana Field.

But a bigger concern at the moment is another of their starting pitchers.

Left-hander Brett Anderson was placed on the 15-day disabled list before the A's opened a six-game road trip with an 8-6 defeat to the Tampa Bay Rays.

Anderson was pulled from Saturday's start against Cleveland after six innings with what was announced as tightness in his left elbow. An MRI on Monday showed he has inflammation in his elbow and a medial forearm strain.

Anderson was scheduled to undergo a "contrast" MRI in the Bay Area on Tuesday, which should provide more detailed images of his arm. Manager Bob Geren didn't have the results after the game.

Anderson is eligible to be activated May 10. But he'll miss at least two starts. The A's haven't announced a starter for Friday when his turn comes up.

Trevor Cahill and Vin Mazzaro, currently in Triple-A Sacramento's rotation, have pitched well and will merit consideration.

Just three weeks into the season, the A's have been hit with a slew of injuries. But any ailment involving Anderson's elbow is cause for heightened worry.

The ink is hardly dry on his four-year, \$12.5 million contract extension, and Anderson is considered the centerpiece of Oakland's future pitching plans.

"Our starting rotation is excellent, and without Brett it's going to be a challenge," second baseman Adam Rosales said. "But we've got guys that will step up. Our whole team is a bunch of resilient competitors."

The A's faced an early 4-0 deficit against the Rays and came right back to tie the game. But Sheets (1-2) couldn't stem the tide in his poorest outing this season. He allowed eight earned runs and nine hits in just four innings, serving up a three-run home run to Pat Burrell and a solo shot to Reid Brignac.

Sheets hadn't allowed that many earned runs since Aug. 15, 2005, when pitching for the Milwaukee Brewers he gave up 10 earned runs to the Colorado Rockies.

"It was absolutely terrible," he said. "We played good enough to win in all facets of the game except starting pitching, and that's disappointing."

The Rays strung together five hits during a four-run second inning. But the A's answered with four of their own in the top of the third, highlighted by Cliff Pennington's three-run homer.

Sheets returned to the mound and gave the lead right back. He got the first two outs in the bottom of the third before walking Carlos Pena and allowing B.J. Upton's single. Then Burrell got a 1-2 curveball low in the zone and lined it over the fence in left for a 7-4 Rays lead.

Burrell is 8-for-19 with three homers in his career against Sheets.

"I've found a way to hit Pat's bat a lot," Sheets said.

The loss put a damper on Pennington's career night. With Rajai Davis sitting for a second straight game, Pennington notched a career-high four hits, including two doubles, and four RBIs in the leadoff spot.

Davis is hitting .143 over his past 15 games, and Geren hinted he may give Eric Patterson another start in the outfield tonight and sit Davis again.

Regardless, Geren said Pennington will lead off for a third straight game.

Rosales also had a career-high four hits, all singles.

The A's optioned reliever Edwar Ramirez to Sacramento and called up catcher Landon Powell and infielder Steve Tolleson to give Geren more options off his bench.

TODAY: A's (Dallas Braden 3-0) at Rays (James Shields 2-0), 4:10 p.m.

TV: CSNCA.

Radio: 860-AM; 1640-AM

## **A's update: Reliever Brad Ziegler frustrated by small crowds at Coliseum**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Ziegler frustrated by small crowds at Coliseum

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Reliever Brad Ziegler uses his Twitter page to give fans access to the daily thoughts of a major leaguer. On Tuesday, he used the platform to question why more fans aren't showing up to A's home games.

Ziegler was making a larger point in reference to the suggestion that fans in Arizona should boycott Diamondbacks games as a way of protesting that state's controversial new immigration law. The Diamondbacks organization is a major contributor to the state Republican party, which pushed for the bill.

Ziegler's contention was there are better ways to protest besides boycotting sporting events.

"It's not much fun to play in front of an empty stadium in your home park," Ziegler tweeted. "We're going through that when A's fans boycott our games because ownership has threatened to move the team. The lack of fans gives them all the more reason to seek other alternatives for a new home city."

The A's ranked last in the majors in attendance last season, averaging 17,392 per game. This season, their average is 17,641 in 14 dates at the Oakland Coliseum.

Ziegler said he understands some issues that keep fans away, including economic woes. But he expanded on his Twitter thoughts before Tuesday's 8-6 loss to the Tampa Bay Rays.

"When we're starting a game, and maybe four or five thousand people are in the stands at the start of a game "... Ziegler said. "I understand some come in late, but it's frustrating to be at this level and know that at Triple-A, there's twice as many fans at the game."

The A's Triple-A Sacramento affiliate averaged 9,126 fans per game last season.

The Rays, who hardly pack fans in themselves, drew just 10,825 on Tuesday.

First baseman Daric Barton, who has a fracture in his right middle finger, felt good in pregame drills and was a late addition to Tuesday's lineup. He went 0 for 5, but all indications are he can continue playing with the injury.

Kurt Suzuki missed his third straight game with a sore back, but manager Bob Geren was optimistic the catcher would return today.

Reliever Joey Devine was diagnosed with severe tendinitis in his right elbow, and not a tear in the flexor tendon as he feared. He's expected to rest for two weeks and resume throwing.

## **A's put Brett Anderson on DL, and other transactions on a busy day**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 4/27/2010 3:45PM

(I made a correction to the pregame blog below. The A's are now carrying 11 pitchers, not 12).

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Tonight's game hasn't even started, and there's already plenty of A's news to report. So here we go ...

–Brett Anderson was placed on the 15-day DL with a strain in his left forearm and inflammation in his elbow. He's getting a second MRI today that should give a clearer read on the severity of the injury, and the A's aren't giving a timetable for his return until they get the results. There's not enough information available to draw conclusions, but obviously the situation is more serious than the team (and Anderson) thought over the weekend. All we know now is that Anderson's DL stint is retroactive to April 25, meaning he can return May 10. That means he'll miss at least two starts. The A's haven't announced who will start Friday. Vin Mazzaro has been throwing great at Triple-A Sacramento, so that's one option. From the current roster, Tyson Ross might be stretched out enough to eat up a few innings if they wanted to go with him.

We might hear more tonight about Anderson's status, so check back ...

–Three other transactions today: Reliever Edwar Ramirez was optioned to Triple-A Sacramento, and catcher Landon Powell and infielder Steve Tolleson were called up. The A's had been carrying 13 pitchers, and with reliever Jerry Blevins' back feeling better, they decided to drop down to 11 and give manager Bob Geren some more options off the bench.

The past week has been nuts for Powell, who was called up Wednesday, got sent back down Friday and then took a flight from Las Vegas to Tampa to rejoin the A's today. He arrived shortly before batting practice and is starting behind the plate tonight. Kurt Suzuki still has tightness in his back.

Pretty good story about Powell and Tolleson, who were college teammates at South Carolina. Tolleson, who was in Las Vegas with the Sacramento club, received word yesterday he was being called up for his big league debut. He and Powell live nearby each other in Sacramento, and Powell was going to drive Tolleson's car from the Sacramento airport back to his apartment for him. Then Powell got the news that he was being called up, and he had to catch a flight from Vegas to Tampa. So Powell's wife, Allyson, had to retrieve Tolleson's car for him. That was no big deal ... Powell and Tolleson were in each others' weddings. They're pretty tight ...

Tolleson played mainly short and third base for Sacramento, but he could see time at second base w/Mark Ellis out.

–First baseman Daric Barton originally was not in tonight's lineup, but his fractured right middle finger felt great when he tried swinging the bat and throwing, so he's now starting. Jake Fox was going to fill in at first.

–Finally, the A's actually got good news on the injury front. Reliever Joey Devine does not have a tear in his elbow as was feared, just severe tendinitis. He'll resume throwing again in about two weeks.

Here's tonight's lineups ... Rajai Davis isn't starting for a second straight game, probably because the A's are facing a right-hander in Tampa Bay's Wade Davis. Rajai is hitting .143 over his past 15 games.

#### **A's**

Pennington SS  
Barton 1B  
Sweeney RF  
Chavez DH  
Kouzmanoff 3B  
Gross CF  
Powell C  
Patterson LF  
Rosales 2B  
Sheets RHP

#### **Rays**

Bartlett SS  
Crawford LF  
Zobrist RF  
Longoria 3B  
Pena 1B  
Upton CF  
Burrell DH  
Jaso C  
Brignac 2B  
Davis RHP

## **A's lose Anderson indefinitely, fall to Rays**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Two first-place teams met at Tropicana Field on Tuesday night, with few fans in attendance, and the AL East-leading Rays hammered the A's \$10 million starter, Ben Sheets, in an 8-6 victory.

The bigger news of the day for Oakland was even less palatable. Brett Anderson, the team's most promising young pitcher, was placed on the disabled list with a proximal medial forearm strain and elbow inflammation.

Anderson, 22, remained in the Bay Area after getting an MRI exam on Monday, and he was sent for a contrast MRI, in which dye is injected into the area of the injury, on Tuesday afternoon.

Those results should give the A's a better idea how much time Anderson might miss. ESPN's Buster Olney reported Tuesday night that Anderson has a flexor tendon strain and will miss four to six weeks, but after the game, Oakland manager Bob Geren said he had not heard anything of the sort, nor had trainer Steve Sayles.

There is little doubt that Oakland will be extra cautious with the left-hander. Anderson was 8-4 with a 2.96 ERA in the second half of his rookie season, and he has started off this season 1-1 with a 2.35 ERA; opponents were batting .227 against him.

"Without Brett, it will be a challenge, but we have other guys who will step up," said A's infielder Adam Rosales, who along with shortstop Cliff Pennington had a career-high four hits.

Pennington hit a three-run homer and two doubles, but the first of those two-base hits would have been a triple had it not been deemed a ground-rule double. "That crossed my mind after the fact," Pennington said. "Obviously, that would have been cool."

Sheets gave up four in the second inning, but the A's came back to tie the game in the third before he allowed three more in the bottom of the inning. He was particularly upset with himself for walking Carlos Peña with two outs; two batters later, Pat Burrell homered into the front row in left on a 1-2 curveball.

"I find a way to hit Pat's bat a lot," Sheets said of Burrell, a lifetime .421 hitter against him.

The A's did have some good injury news Tuesday: Daric Barton, despite injuring his right middle finger (fractured volar plate) on Sunday, took batting practice and grounders at first, then was a late addition to the lineup.

After coming out of Saturday's game after six innings and 80 pitches, Anderson said he believed the problem to be minor, similar to a slight issue he'd had during spring 2009 that knocked him out of a game after two innings.

With Anderson unlikely to return until June, the A's are likely to call up either Vin Mazzaro or Trevor Cahill from Triple-A Sacramento.

Mazzaro is scheduled to start for the River Cats on Thursday, and he's 1-1 with a 1.86 ERA and 21 strikeouts in 191/3 innings. Cahill, who was in Oakland's rotation all of last year, is 1-0 with a 1.04 ERA. He's scheduled for Friday for Sacramento.

## Whirlwind week brings Powell back to A's

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

**Landon Powell** was at baggage claim in Tampa on Tuesday when manager **Bob Geren** called and asked him how he was doing. "Fine," Powell said.

"Good, you're in the lineup tonight," Geren replied.

Powell relayed that conversation with a chuckle because he's had such an odd week. He was called up a week ago when **Mark Ellis** went on the disabled list, then sent out two days later, having not played. Here he is again - and right into the game after flying all day from Las Vegas.

Not that he's complaining. Powell, the A's backup catcher last year, is just happy to be on the roster, though it has made for an unpredictable schedule. When he was called up last week, Powell's wife, **Allyson**, bought plane tickets to come to this series at Tropicana Field. When he was sent down, she returned the tickets and went from their home in South Carolina to visit Powell in Las Vegas, instead. And then he wound up leaving there a day early.

Starting catcher **Kurt Suzuki** (sore left side) believes he'll be ready to play tonight.

**Tolleson gets call:** Infielder **Steve Tolleson**, Powell's teammate at South Carolina, also came up - his first big-league call up. He'll be used as a backup.

"This team is off to such a great start, I'm just happy to be part of this," said Tolleson, 26, who is the son of former big-leaguer **Wayne Tolleson**. Tolleson's parents and his wife, **Baileigh**, were in attendance Tuesday.

**Briefly:** **Joey Devine** has elbow tendinitis and will be shut down for two weeks, but considering that the reliever feared he might have a torn flexor tendon, that's good news. ... Left-hander **Jerry Blevins** has recovered from back spasms, so right-hander **Edwar Ramirez** was optioned out. Ramirez, who flew with the team to Tampa, will fly to Sacramento today. ...

**Michael Wuertz** will make another minor-league rehab appearance today, according to Geren.

## A's leading off

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**Ziegler tweets:** Brad Ziegler got into some Twitter debates over attendance issues and boycotts Tuesday. "I totally get the fans' side of it," he said later. "I'm just trying to give the players' side. We like playing in front of people."

## Anderson on DL, Powell and Tolleson up - updated

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser in St. Petersburg, Fla.

UPDATE: Barton is now playing, see below.

Brett Anderson is about to be placed on the DL with a medial forearm strain and elbow irritation, and he's scheduled for a contrast MRI, which should give the team a better idea about a timetable for his return. Anderson, 22, is obviously a major piece of the A's future and they're going to be cautious with a player they just handed a multi-year contract.

So Landon Powell was recalled less than a week after being sent down (that's allowed in the case of a DL) and he's in the lineup tonight because Kurt Suzuki (sore left side) isn't quite ready to go yet. Suzuki said he hopes tomorrow night or, for sure, Thursday in Toronto.

UPDATE: Powell told me both Vin Mazzaro and Trevor Cahill look great at Sacramento; he said even Mazzaro's one poor outing was actually good, but the team made numerous errors behind him and he gave up some bloop hits and bleeders. Powell said Mazzaro's day to pitch is Thursday and Cahill's is Friday, which doesn't narrow it down any. Both are candidates to pitch at Toronto on Friday. Do the A's go with the guy who's been the Pacific Coast League's best starter in the early going (Mazzaro)? Or the guy who was in the Oakland rotation all of last year (Cahill)?

Daric Barton isn't going on the DL, but he's not in the lineup tonight - Jake Fox is at first, a spot he played little this spring but which a scout just told me is his best position.

UPDATE: After taking batting practice and some first base, Barton was OK'd to play tonight. He's now in the lineup and batting second. I'll re-do the earlier lineup to reflect that. Barton said he can throw with that injured right middle finger (fractured volar plate) so, for once, the A's appear to be dodging a DL stay.

Here's some other good injury info: Joey Devine visited Dr. James Andrews on Monday and he was diagnosed with severe elbow tendinitis. Why is that good? Devine thought he might need his flexor tendon repaired, but instead, he's just getting shut down from throwing for two weeks and then he'll resume rehab. Tendinitis is very common among those coming back from Tommy John surgery; A's minor-leaguer Fautino De Los Santos has been dealing with tendinitis and other issues for more than two years.

Infielder Steve Tolleson is en route for his first big-league callup, but a corresponding move has not yet been made. It will be a reliever, because Jerry Blevins had a good side session today, but it's unlikely that it's Brad Kilby going out - he's throwing the ball well.

I'll try to update that later.

UPDATE: Edwar Ramirez, whose control has been off lately, was optioned to Triple-A Sacramento. He said he'll concentrate on working on his fastball location.

Here's the lineup (UPDATED): Pennington ss, Barton 1B, Sweeney rf, Chavez dh, Kouzmanoff 3b, Gross cf, Powell c, Patterson lf, Rosales 2b.

A reminder: I'm providing A's news as soon as I get it via Twitter account @susanslusser. All the info above was tweeted much earlier. So if you're eager to get breaking news, that's the best spot, and I try to fill in details and do some speculating here.

## **A's bats deliver, but Sheets struggles**

### **Righty yields eight runs; Pennington, Rosales excel at plate**

By Chris Girandola / Special to MLB.com

ST. PETERSBURG -- For the A's, the glass half-full way of looking at Tuesday's 8-6 loss to the Rays in front of 10,845 at Tropicana Field could be found at the very top and bottom of the order.

While A's starter Ben Sheets suffered his worst loss since 2005, Cliff Pennington, hitting in the leadoff spot, and Adam Rosales, batting in the ninth spot, each had career nights, with four hits apiece.

In fact, Pennington, who had already singled and homered, came a bounce away from hitting for the cycle, as his ground-rule double in the sixth could easily have been a triple for the 5-foot-11 infielder.

"It crossed my mind after the fact [when he hit a double later in the eighth]," said Pennington, who hit leadoff for the third time this season. "[Having four hits] would have been much more enjoyable had we won the game."

Pennington, who finished 4-for-5, and Rosales, who went 4-for-4, were part of an offense that put up four runs against Rays starter Wade Davis, who had tossed six scoreless innings in his previous outing. But Sheets admittedly struggled in a performance he described as "pathetic."

"It's absolutely terrible, because we played good enough to win," said Sheets, who gave up eight runs and nine hits in four innings. "In all facets of the game, we played well, except for the pitching. It's just not good. When they give you four runs back and then you give it up like that, it's not good at all."

Sheets was most disturbed by the five hits he allowed in Tampa Bay's four-run second and the walk he allowed in the third that eventually led to Pat Burrell's three-run homer.

After getting through the first unscathed, the 31-year-old right-hander gave up a leadoff double to Evan Longoria, a run-scoring single to Carlos Pena, a one-out run-scoring double to John Jaso and a two-out two-run single to Jason Bartlett. Then in the next frame, Sheets, who had issued 11 of his 13 walks coming into Tuesday's game to left-handed hitters, allowed the lefty-swinging Pena to reach base on four balls with two outs. Two batters later, Burrell, who is a career .421 hitter with three home runs against Sheets, deposited a breaking ball on a 1-2 count barely over the left-field wall for his second homer of the season.

"It's just not acceptable to pitch like that," said Sheets, who had given up just one home run in his first four starts. "The home runs I can deal with, but when you prolong innings like that with hit after hit, or you keep an inning alive with a two-out walk, it's not good."

In the third, Pennington hit his third homer of the season in the inning in which the A's seemed on the verge of chasing Davis from the game. But after tossing 41 pitches in the frame, the 6-foot-5 right-hander settled down and escaped with his second win of the season and the Rays' third win in his past three starts.

"It's unfortunate, because we had a good offensive night against some good pitching over there," A's manager Bob Geren said. "We got the offense going tonight, the top half and the bottom half, against a pretty good starter. It's too bad we couldn't have done more with it."

The A's, who lost their first game of the season when scoring four or more runs, had a chance to tie the game or regain the lead in the eighth off Rays reliever Grant Balfour. Trailing, 8-6, Eric Patterson doubled with two outs and scored on a single by Rosales. Following Pennington's second double, though, Daric Barton, who left six men on base, struck out looking on a 1-2 fastball.

Despite the loss, Oakland continued its stay in first place in the American League West for the 21st consecutive day, which is the club's longest streak of days in first since 2006, when it spent the final 65 days atop the division.

In addition, Geren reveled by the fact that Barton, who had fractured the volar plate in the middle finger of his right hand, was healthy enough to play and that another possibility at leadoff had been found.

"[Barton being able to play] was a piece of good news," said Geren, who determined the first baseman was fit to play after watching him during batting practice. "It's also great to see how versatile we can be. We can be a very versatile team with Cliff batting like that and Rosales doing so as well."

## **Anderson on DL with elbow, forearm issues**

### **Oakland southpaw dealing with inflammation, to undergo MRI**

By Chris Girandola / Special to MLB.com

ST. PETERSBURG -- After using the disabled list 17 times last season, the A's had already used the DL eight times this year. On Tuesday, lefty Brett Anderson joined the list after being diagnosed with inflammation in his left elbow and a proximal medial forearm strain.

Anderson departed his previous start with tightness in his left elbow. A's manager Bob Geren said he would know the full extent of the injury to his 22-year-old left-hander after a contrast MRI was performed Tuesday in Oakland.

"We'll have a better idea on his timetable after getting the results," Geren said. "Hopefully the MRI will show more detailed photos and we'll know where to go from there."

Anderson, who recently agreed to a four-year contract extension with options for 2014 and '15, had pitched well this season, with a 2.35 ERA through four starts.

When asked who would fill Anderson's spot, Geren was noncommittal, only to say that the team "has plenty of options."

Those options include pitchers in the "Minor Leagues and the Majors," according to Geren.

One of the most likely Minor League starters seems to be 23-year-old right-hander Vin Mazzaro, who is 1-1 with a 1.86 ERA in three starts and four appearances with Triple-A Sacramento.

Another option is righty Trevor Cahill, who was reinstated from the 15-day DL last week and optioned to Sacramento. The 22-year-old led the team and all rookies in the Majors last season with 32 starts, and compiled an 11-13 record with a 4.63 ERA.

A pitcher Geren might choose from the Major League squad could be reliever Chad Gaudin, who combined for a 6-10 record and a 4.64 ERA in 31 games, 25 starts, with the Yankees and Padres in 2009. The right-hander has allowed two runs in three of his six outings this season, including Saturday, when he was charged with his second loss of the year.

### **Reliever Ramirez sent to Triple-A**

ST. PETERSBURG -- The A's optioned reliever Edwar Ramirez to Triple-A Sacramento on Tuesday as a part of Brett Anderson's trip to the 15-day disabled list.

Ramirez has struggled this season, and manager Bob Geren said the righty's eight walks in 10 innings, which is tied for fifth among American League relievers, were a major reason for the demotion.

"Yeah, we had an eight-man bullpen and now we're going back down to a seven-man one," Geren said.

The right-handed reliever is 1-0 with a 4.50 ERA through six appearances this season.

"I'm sure he'll go down there and pitch well," Geren said.

### **Devine to begin throwing in two weeks**

ST. PETERSBURG -- Manager Bob Geren said Tuesday that reliever Joey Devine would begin throwing again in two weeks.

Devine has been suffering from what Geren described as tendinitis from the Tommy John surgery the right-hander had in April 2009 that caused him to miss the entire season.

"It's a positive sign that he's getting to the point of throwing again," Geren said.

### **Tolleson, Powell get called to The Show**

ST. PETERSBURG -- With Brett Anderson headed to the DL and Edwar Ramirez going to the Minors, the A's on Tuesday recalled infielder Steve Tolleson and catcher Landon Powell.

Tolleson and Powell played together at the University of South Carolina, helping the Gamecocks to three straight College World Series appearances from 2002-04.

Powell, who was hitting .222 with a home run and six walks at Sacramento, will be back with the A's for the second time this season after being called up briefly less than a week ago when Mark Ellis went to the DL. The 28-year-old switch-hitting catcher had just seen his 10-month-old son, Holden, and his wife, Allyson, for the first time in more than a month when the team played in Las Vegas when he got the call.

"Hopefully, when we return back to Oakland from this road trip, I'll still be up," Powell said.

Tolleson, the son of former utility player Wayne Tolleson, has yet to make his Major League debut, but the callup is one he will always remember.

"I got the call from [Sacramento manager Tony DeFrancesco], and then had to figure out who I should call first," said Tolleson, who was batting .333 with a home run and eight RBIs in 16 games. "I went back and forth between either calling my wife [Baileigh] or my dad. I decided on my dad because of all he's done for me."

Tolleson had a bit of fun with it, too.

"I called him and told him we had just played in Vegas and I said it wasn't the type of place for me, and that I'd like to see what Florida had to offer," said Tolleson, who took a flight to St. Petersburg to meet the team for its two-game series against the Rays. "He was like, 'Huh, I don't get it.' And I told him how I thought Florida would be a nice place to visit or live one day. Finally, I told him I got the callup, and it was just a great moment -- one I'll always recall."



Tolleson's dad, whom Geren played with when the A's manager was with the Yankees from 1988-91, was expected to be at Tropicana Field on Tuesday night.

### **Ziegler discusses comments on boycott**

ST. PETERSBURG -- A's reliever Brad Ziegler, who has become proficient in the social media world of Twitter, spent part of his time before Tuesday's game talking about his recent rant on suggestions that fans should boycott D-backs games as part of a broad protest against a new Arizona immigration bill.

"I don't understand the law and everything that goes with it," said Ziegler, who made several tweets about the subject throughout the day Tuesday. "In a lot of ways, the law can be considered racial profiling, and I'm very much opposed to that, but I don't know that boycotting a baseball stadium and the games is the answer to getting them to repeal an immigration law."

The law, which was signed on Friday by Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer and is slated to take effect in 90 days, requires state and local police to determine a person's immigration status if there is "reasonable suspicion" that they are undocumented -- a mandate that critics say opens the door to racial profiling.

### **Worth noting**

Entering Tuesday's game, Ryan Sweeney had reached base safely via hit or walk in all 19 of his games this season, which is the longest by an Athletics hitter to start the season since Jeremy Giambi had a 25-game streak in 2002. Sweeney extended the streak to 20 with a single in the third. ... Outfielder Jai Miller was claimed off waivers by the Royals on Monday. Miller was claimed off waivers by the A's from the Marlins on April 8 after hitting .107 in eight spring games with Florida. He was batting .118 with one RBI in 10 games with Triple-A Sacramento before he was designated for assignment Thursday. ... First baseman Daric Barton was inserted into Tuesday's lineup after taking batting practice and fielding ground balls. Manager Bob Geren said he would evaluate Barton and he decided to put him into the lineup.

## **Rays stay hot at A's expense**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Pat Burrell and Reid Brignac homered Tuesday night, helping the Tampa Bay Rays match a club record for wins in April with an 8-6 victory over the Oakland Athletics.

The AL East leaders improved baseball's best record to 15-5. The victory total equals the number they had in the opening month two years ago, when they made a surprising run to the World Series.

Burrell's three-run homer off Ben Sheets (1-2) snapped a 4-4 tie in the third inning. Brignac's solo shot leading off the bottom of the fourth gave right-hander Wade Davis (2-1) an 8-4 lead.

The Rays have won 12 of 14 and are off to the best start in the team's 13-season history. Nevertheless, attendance for the opener of a two-game series against another first-place team drew an announced crowd of 10,825 to Tropicana Field.

Davis weathered a shaky five innings to win his second straight decision. He gave up a three-run homer to Cliff Pennington, who had four hits and four RBI's — both career highs — for the A's.

Pennington's RBI double off Lance Cormier trimmed Oakland's deficit to 8-5 in the sixth. Adam Rosales drove in a run with his career-best fourth hit — making it 8-6 in the eighth — however the A's stranded the potential tying runs in scoring position when Daric Barton struck out.

Rafael Soriano pitched a perfect ninth for Tampa Bay, earning his fifth save in five opportunities.

The Rays played without catcher Dioner Navarro, who began serving a two-game suspension for bumping an umpire during an argument last week. He also will sit out Wednesday's finale against the A's.

Jason Bartlett's two-run single was the biggest blow in Tampa Bay's four-run second inning against Sheets, who allowed eight runs and nine hits in four innings. Carlos Pena and John Jaso, filling in for Navarro, also drove in runs in the inning.

Davis, however, couldn't hold the early lead.

The A's struck for four runs of their own in the third, with Pennington's third homer of the season doing most of the damage. The A's went on to load the bases with two outs on a walk and pair of singles before Gabe Gross lifted a sacrifice fly to make it 4-4.

Burrell, who's 8-for-19 with three homers lifetime against Sheets, put Tampa Bay ahead for good. Brignac's homer leading off the fourth inning restored a four-run lead for Davis, who yielded four runs and seven hits.

Notes

Pennington is 6-for-24 on the road, and three of the hits have been home runs.

LF Eric Patterson's second-inning throwing error snapped Oakland's season-high streak of six consecutive games without an error.

Rays LHP J.P. Howell, who's on the 15-day disabled list with a strained left shoulder, is set to make 25 to 30 "nice and easy" throws off a mound on Wednesday.

Oakland C Kurt Suzuki missed his third straight game with soreness in his left side.

Barton was in the lineup at first base for the A's, despite a small fracture of his right middle finger. He was hurt Sunday sliding into the dugout to make a catch.

## **Athletics struggle with home attendance**

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — The Oakland Athletics' quick start has not translated into big crowds.

"Just from a players' perspective, it's tough to play in front of an empty stadium," Oakland reliever Brad Ziegler said before the Athletics' game against the Tampa Bay Rays on Tuesday night. "We're starting the game and there's maybe four, five thousand people in the stands. It's frustrating."

The AL West-leading A's have an announced average attendance of 17,641 through 14 home games this season.

The economy, last season's record of 75-87 and fan unhappiness about the potential relocation of the franchise from Oakland all contribute to the problem.

"I've heard about some of our fans boycotting our games because of the team threatening to move to another city," Ziegler said. "Some fans are on websites, boycott the move. We can't sell out opening day. It makes you wonder if there's something to that. I understand their frustration. I'm a die-hard fan. They don't want the team to move. I totally get the fans' side of it."

Ziegler is hopeful the team's strong start eventually impacts attendance.

"We're in first place right now," Ziegler said. "Playing good baseball, exciting baseball to watch. We've won several games in our last few games. We should encourage the fans to come out."

Through Monday, only Cleveland (16,033) and Toronto (16,032) had lower average home attendance figures in the AL. The league average was 17,641. The league's attendance was helped in part by a new, outdoor stadium in Minnesota.

"We like playing in front of crowds," Ziegler said. "We like to get that adrenaline that the crowd gives us. It's tougher to do when you're in front of an empty stadium."

## **Your 2010 Oakland Athletics: These Questions Will Determine Their Fate**

Andrew Brining, Bleacher Report, 4/28/2010

The Oakland Athletics were gracious enough to hook Bleacher Report up with a press pass and a closer look at their collection of young talent.

In a stroke of surreal good fortune, I found myself on assignment and standing amidst the bright green grass of the Oakland Coliseum for a second time in my life.

Whereas before I wore my high school baseball uniform and played in what would be my last game of organized hardball (we won the North Coast Section final on that very field in 1997), this time I came armed with digital recorder and computer to document the experience.

And it was quite an experience.

As a die-hard San Francisco Giant fan, there was a time when I loathed Oakland's green and yellow crew.

Happily, the departures of Tony La Russa, Mark McGwire, Rickey Henderson, and—most of all, Jose Canseco, have conspired with Billy Beane's "moneyballing" ways to turn this franchise into the club you can't help but love.

Nevertheless, I wouldn't say I had watched the team closely in 2010 until last Friday.

What I saw against the Cleveland Indians was enough to convince me that the A's are very much for real.

If a handful of key elements can remain strong and they catch a few breaks, the Athletics' early season buzz will be no mirage and could survive the summer into the fall.

If those elements falter and Lady Luck chooses another suitor?

## **Oakland Athletics Are Only a Couple of Tweaks Away from the San Francisco Giants**

by [Andrew Brining](#), Bleacher Report, 4/27/2010

Northern California, like her sunnier Southern counterpart, is prone to drought.

Despite the Hollywood imagery, the Golden State is not a naturally lush paradise with green hills rolling down to meet blue ocean. In reality, most of the State was a desert and eventually will be once again.

Our very nasty, not-so-secret secret is that Cali simply does not get enough water to sustain our current rate of growth.

In fact, Los Angeles already gets most of its water from the [Colorado River](#)—a gentle little trickle that carved out the Grand Canyon and never really enters California, just skips along the southeastern edge before entering Mexico and dumping into the Gulf of California.

Or at least it used to—the flow's been reduced so drastically it no longer reaches the Gulf.

I mention the ebb and flow of the water table because the San Francisco Bay Area's baseball teams have mimicked its feast/famine tendencies.

The Oakland Athletics were *the* powerhouse in baseball for a number of years in the late-1980s and early-1990s. Then came a series of lean years for the franchise until it emerged into *Moneyball* glory around the change of the millennia.

Across the Bay, the San Francisco Giants shared a similar fate.

Sadly for the faithful, the orange and black highs couldn't match those of the green and yellow, while the lows were every bit as dark.

The Giants fielded some good squads in 1987 and 1989. But the rest of those years were a mix of apathetic anemia and excruciatingly close calls, including the Last Pure Pennant Race (which was ruined by Fred McGriff).

Thankfully, the organization ended the postseason drought in 1997, beating Oakland to the punch by a few years. Once the A's caught up, the two coasted along in contrasting lockstep until the middle of the last decade when the wheels came off in ugly, BALCO-tainted fashion for both.

Today, the pattern seems to be continuing as both squads appear to be perched on the edge of immediate and enduring contention.

The observation is already generally accepted regarding the Giants within baseball circles of all types.

San Francisco's dominant young pitching from the starting rotation, bullpen, and farm system looks primed to carry the team while there are blossoming offensive options in the Minors and helpful free agents soon to be available on the open market.

The club might not be expected to make a serious charge at the World Series, but most agree it will contend deep into autumn and progress from there.

The same cannot be said about the A's, but, upon closer inspection, perhaps it should be and for eerily similar reasons.

Billy Beane and his suited cohorts have assembled an impressive arsenal of young arms.

Brett Anderson has already shown extended flashes of his left-handed brilliance at the Major League level, throwing to a 1.26 WHIP and 3.86 ERA in his first 198 1/3 IP to lineups featuring designated hitters. That's pretty gnarly for *any* young pitcher, let alone a kid who turned 22 in February.

Obviously, Anderson doesn't have two Cy Youngs so he doesn't get or deserve the same kind of national adoration showered upon Tim Lincecum. Motions aside, though, the A's young ace has some very Freak-ish qualities.

As for a second exciting young arm, how about Dallas Braden?

The world is suddenly familiar with the 26-year-old because of the recent incident with Alex Rodriguez, but his pitching should be getting the attention.

The southpaw had a highly anticipated career stalled just enough by injury to drop him from the red-hot radar, but he looks to be back on track so far in 2010.

Perhaps he wasn't intimidated by A-Rod because he's currently feeling the oats of a shiny start—3-0, 2.77 ERA, 0.85 WHIP, and 18 K against four walks.

If Braden were right-handed, the echo of Matt Cain would be much louder.

Gio Gonzalez is a 24-year-old lefty who has yet to deliver on his full promise, but only because it is considerable, which is vaguely reminiscent of Jonathan Sanchez. Vin Mazzaro (23) and Trevor Cahill (22) are younger, right-handed re-tellings of the same story.

Out in the bullpen, you've got the 2009 American League Rookie of the Year in closer Andrew Bailey. That's one fire-breathing 25-year-old to go along with blue-chipper Tyson Ross (only 23).

Consider the pair a less proven alternative to Giants' closer Brian Wilson and green set-up man, Sergio Romo.

Additionally, the rest of the youth isn't as established as San Francisco's or as deep, but there is still quite a bit to like.

Meanwhile, the crusty veterans ushering in the fresh talent is superior in Oakland.

Barry Zito's resurgence makes the issue closer as he and Justin Duchscherer now look like possibly dominant reservoirs of knowledge. Nevertheless, a rejuvenated Ben Sheets blows the sputtering Todd Wellemeyer out of the water.

As for the offense, both Bay Area denizens boast yawn-inducing lineups that will surely waste some of the good pitching. Yet help is on the way and there might be enough to make due in the meantime.

Daric Barton is a stark contrast to Pablo Sandoval in most ways, but both share exciting potential and ample reason to believe it will arrive (finally, in Barton's case). Both Oakland and San Francisco rely heavily on underrated catchers—Kurt Suzuki and Bengie Molina, respectively—for big hits while the rest of the splinters focus on situational contributions.

If things get rough enough, the two organizations can look to the farm for help—that means Buster Posey (23) for SF, and Chris Carter (23) and/or Michael Taylor (24) for Oakland.

Again, the offensive scales—adjusted for the DH—would probably tip slightly toward San Francisco.

Of course, the Athletics absolutely obliterate the Giants defensively, which could ultimately be the equalizer.

The speed and agility on display at the Oakland Coliseum is really something to watch. It's more comparable to the 1993 San Francisco Giant defense than the current version.

As far as I can tell, there is only one good explanation for the general acceptance of the Giants as a contender compared to the general skepticism surrounding the Athletics—the divisions.

The National League West is perceived to be more wide-open than its Junior Circuit sibling. Given the Los Angeles Angels' recent history, the strides made by the Texas Rangers, and the paper monstrosity that is the Seattle Mariner pitching staff, perhaps that's true.

But nobody expected the 2009 San Francisco Giants to hang around as long as they did.

And the 2010 Oakland Athletics do look familiar...

## **Everything you ever wanted to know about the A's — and more!**

By Patrick Franklin, Montgomery News, 4/27/2010

The only thing bigger in Philadelphia now than the size of Ryan Howard's new contract is the amount of information in Ted Taylor's new book, "The Ultimate Philadelphia Athletics Reference Book: 1901-1954."

Taylor is the founding president of the Philadelphia Athletics Historical Society. After reading two of his books on this legendary but oft-forgotten baseball club, I am beginning to believe he knows more about this team than Connie Mack himself.

If you are a Philadelphia Athletics fan, this is the book you have been waiting for and will be the last book (other than Taylor's first book, "The Philadelphia Athletics by the Numbers ... or Let's Give Skeeter #2") you will ever need on the A's. If you simply are a baseball fan and haven't ever had any interest in the A's, then better still: You will learn about one of the most spellbinding organizations in baseball history.

The book is crammed with over 1,200 bios and stories of every single player, coach and manager who was ever involved with the A's, as well as some personnel, a complete season-by-season rundown, key trades, league leaders and honors, and every fact you can imagine about this ball club.

That right there is like taking Ryan Howard's new contract and multiplying it by 10. The amount of information in this book is proof enough that Connie Mack couldn't have done a better job himself.

Everyone from Spencer Abbott to Jimmy Zinn to Babe Ruth (yes, Babe Ruth) to even the mascot has a short bio in this book. In my opinion, the less you know about the Philadelphia Athletics, the better. You will come out of this book with a true respect for the American League franchise that should have never left Philadelphia. Former Phillies President Bill Giles said it himself, "Philadelphia was always an American League city. I can't imagine how they let this happen."

The fact that it did happen, though, is part of the reason Taylor and so many others love this franchise.

Taylor describes it perfectly, "We love the Athletics because they are complete. No more chapters will be written, they will not lose another game, they will not trade away another one of your favorite players and they will always be nine-time American League Champions and five-time World Champions."

The time is now for baseball fans all across Philadelphia to read and learn about the most successful baseball franchise that ever ran the bases in this city. You will learn about one of the most mysterious managers in baseball, Connie Mack, who assembled dynasties, only to trade away the star players to "pay the bills."

You will learn about when Babe Ruth played for the Philadelphia Athletics. You will learn about Lena Blackburne, who discovered the special Delaware River mud that is used to rub up baseballs to this day. You will learn about every single person who was ever involved in an A's box score, and even many who weren't.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Sacramento takes series from division rival**

By Nick Hunte / Sacramento River Cats

The Sacramento River Cats put on a relentless slugfest against the Las Vegas 51s, beating their Pacific South Division rivals 15-6 and finishing a 3-games-to-1 series victory.

After losing six in a row at home, the River Cats seem to have found their bats on the road.

Sacramento scored nine of its 15 runs in the first two innings, with six in the second. Starting right-hander Lance Broadway (0-2, 7.20 ERA) of the 51s gave up nine hits and nine runs in just 2.0 innings. He ended up giving up 10 hits and 12 runs in just 4.1 innings for the game.

It was the River Cats' offense that was the difference-maker, as seven of nine starters had at least one hit and one RBI. The top performer was Josh Donaldson, who had four hits in six at-bats and four RBIs.

Other top producers included left-fielder Corey Wimberly (3-for-6, 2 RBIs), who hit a ground ball triple to right field that scored center fielder Corey Brown in the second. Right fielder Michael Taylor (3-for-5, 2 RBIs) also put on a good performance, hitting a triple to center that scored first baseman Chris Carter and designated hitter Jack Cust.

Trailing 12-0 in the fifth, Las Vegas catcher J.P. Arencibia (3-for-4) hit a solo home run to left field to put the 51s on the scoreboard. The 51s scored three more runs in the sixth, including an RBI double by former River Cat Brent Wallace.

River Cats starter Clayton Mortenson (3-1, 4.32 ERA) picked up the win for Sacramento despite giving up nine hits and six runs in 7.0 innings.

In other news, catcher Landon Powell and infielder Steve Tolleson were called up to the Oakland Athletics before the game, leaving Sacramento with 10 position players. Right-hander Edwar Ramirez was sent from the A's and added to the River Cats roster.

The River Cats will have the day off Wednesday and then travel to Fresno to take on the Grizzlies starting Thursday.

## **Weeks Leads The Way in 8-2 Win**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

The 'Hounds scored six unanswered runs, five of them with two out in the eighth inning, to defeat the Corpus Christi Hooks, 8-2, Tuesday night at Whataburger Field.

Sunday afternoon at Citibank Ballpark and Monday night in Corpus, the 'Hounds had fallen by one run, with the opposition winning the game in the ninth inning of both games. Tuesday, the 'Hounds and Hooks had battled to a 2-2 tie through six innings, and appeared on the way to another "night of drama."

Jermaine Michell tripled to open the seventh, and Jemile Weeks singled to right with what would be the game-winner.

Before the 'Hounds broke the game open, Jason Ray denied a Hooks comeback. After giving up a lead-off double in the last of the seventh ... moments after the 'Hounds had taken the lead ... Ray recorded three straight outs with the tying run in scoring position.

Archie Gilbert then walked to open the eighth and stole second ... and the 'Hounds loaded the bases with one out. After Mitchell struck out, reliever Jared Wells came on to face Weeks, who came through again. Jemile's two-run single made it a 5-2 game ... Matt Sulentic followed with another two-run single, and Alex Valdez capped the 5-run inning with an RBI triple, as the RockHounds ensured there would be no drama on this night.

All nine RockHounds hitters reached base ... with eight scoring and/or driving in a run ... with Weeks' three RBI leading the way. Also notable was Yung-Chi Chen, who broke out of a miserable slump (7-for-51 entering the game) with a key, RBI triple early in the game and a 2-for-3 night with sacrifice bunt that helped set up the 5-run eighth.

Pedro Figueroa was solid through 5.0 innings, allowing just two runs. Ray picked up the win with two scoreless innings and Justin Souza faced and retired six-in-a-row to end the game.

## **Ports Bats Silenced In 5-1 Loss To Giants**

SAN JOSE, Calif. - It has certainly been a season of peaks and valleys offensively speaking for the 2010 Stockton Ports. After pounding out 46 hits over their last four games, the Boys of Banner Island found themselves back in a valley, Stockton mustered just three hits over their first eight innings on Tuesday night and came perilously close to being shut out for the second time on their seven-game road trip, save for a run late in the ninth. The San Jose Giants benefited from outstanding pitching and cruised to a 5-1 win, evening the series at a game apiece.

The Giants struck first and jumped on Ports starter Anivoris Ramirez (0-4) early. With one out in the first, Ryan Lormand singled to right, followed by a Francisco Peguero triple to right-center to put the Giants up 1-0. Peguero scored on an

ensuing single to left from Brandon Belt to make it 2-0. Two batters later following a steal of second base, Belt scored on an RBI double to left from Charlie Culberson to put the Giants up 3-0.

Ramirez would allow a run in the third on a sac-fly from Belt, and a run in the fifth on a two-out RBI single from Belt to put the Giants up by a count of 5-0. On Belt's fifth-inning RBI single, a throw home from Ports right-fielder Jeremy Barfield beat Juan Perez to the plate as Perez tried to score the Giants' sixth run.

Ramirez would take his fourth loss in as many starts, going five innings and allowing five runs on eight hits while striking out three. Ramirez has now allowed five runs in each of his first four starts of the season.

Meanwhile, San Jose spot-starter Eric Stolp (1-2) looked less like a spot-starter and more like a seasoned member of the rotation. Stolp retired five of the first six he faced to start the game, and was in a jam only one time-in the top of the third. Tyler Ladendorf singled to start the inning and Dusty Napoleon drew a walk, putting two aboard with nobody out. Stolp would bear down, however, and retire the next three batters in a row including a pair of strikeouts. After Stolp walked Napoleon in the third, he went on to retire the final nine batters he faced.

Stolp picked up his first win of the season, going five full innings and allowing just one hit while striking out four.

Oliver Odle picked up where Stolp left off. Odle faced an early jam in the sixth when the Ports got back-to-back singles from Shane Keough and Grant Green with one out. Odle would induce a pair of consecutive ground balls to escape the inning unscathed.

Odle set the side down in Order in both the seventh and eighth innings, using only five pitches per inning to get the job done.

The Ports, despite their offensive shortcomings all night, would manage to get the possible tying run to the plate in the ninth. With Odle still on the hill, Stockton loaded the bases with one out. Petey Paramore grounded to second to score Stockton's lone run of the game, bringing Green in from third and making it 5-1. After Odle walked Ladendorf to reload the bases, the Giants summoned Jason Stoffel (SV, 5) from the bullpen to face pinch-hitter Kala Ka'aihue. On Stoffel's second pitch, Ka'aihue flew to center to end the game.

A silver lining for the Ports was the work of their bullpen. Scott Deal and newcomer Dan McDaniel combined for three innings of scoreless relief, yielding only one hit in that span.

The Ports and Giants will play the finale of their three-game set on Wednesday at Municipal Stadium. Right-hander Justin Murray (1-1, 3.29 ERA) will toe the rubber for Stockton, opposed by southpaw Eric Surkamp (1-0, 1.59 ERA) for San Jose. First pitch is set for 7 p.m. PDT.

## **Cougars Blast Past River Bandits**

GENEVA, Ill. - After going 2-4 on a six-game road trip and enjoying a day off Monday, the Kane County Cougars returned to action Tuesday night with a 10-5 thrashing of the first-place Quad Cities River Bandits at Elfstrom Stadium. Tyreace House and Conner Crumbliss combined for six hits and seven runs at the top of a lineup that knocked out 14 hits, and Chris Mederos notched a second victory with his third quality start in four tries this season.

The Cougars scored two quick runs in the first off Shelby Miller (0-1), as Kent Walton nailed an RBI double and Anthony Aliotti brought home House with a grounder. Quad Cities managed three unearned runs in the third against Mederos, but the Cougars reclaimed control with two runs in the bottom half on doubles from Walton and Max Stassi and never looked back. Mederos (2-1) gave up four runs -- one earned -- on six hits in six innings, walked none and fanned eight in the win.

The Cougars added a run in the sixth on a Stassi single and two in the seventh no RBIs from Crumbliss and House. Josh Lansford gave up one run in two relief innings, and Jose Guzman handled the ninth in non-save situation.

The Cougars (9-10) and River Bandits (14-5) continue the three-game series Wednesday at noon CT. Justin Marks (0-2, 10.50) will face Dan Calhoun (0-0, 4.63). The game will be broadcast online at [www.kccougars.com](http://www.kccougars.com), with pregame coverage starting at 11:45 p.m.