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Rangers derail streaking A's behind Oswalt

By T.R. Sullivan

7/18/12

OAKLAND -- Rangers starter Roy Oswalt said he is getting close to pitching at the level he was in 2010, which he maintains was as good as he's ever been in his highly successful career.

A 6-1 victory over the hard-charging Athletics supported Oswalt's claim at a time when he's trying to secure his spot in the Rangers rotation. If he can pitch consistently at his former stellar level, Texas may be able to back away from Cole Hamels, Zack Greinke and some of the other pitchers seemingly being made available before the July 31 Trade Deadline.

"I'm getting there," Oswalt said after allowing one run in 6 1/3 innings on Tuesday night at the Coliseum.

That the Rangers are scouting Hamels, Greinke and others, and are keeping their options open as far as starting pitching suggests they are still evaluating Oswalt. This was just his fifth start since joining the rotation, but manager Ron Washington acknowledged it was his best to this point.

"He did an excellent job," Washington said. "He had a real good mix tonight. He changed speeds, kept the ball down, got ahead of hitters. ... He did a real good job. He really did."

Oswalt allowed three hits, did not walk a batter and struck out six. He took a two-hit shutout into the seventh before giving up a leadoff home run to Josh Reddick. He then struck out Yoenis Cespedes and was pulled after throwing 103 pitches.

"Well, Roy pitched well with all four pitches," Oakland manager Bob Melvin said. "He pitches a little differently now than he used to, when he was throwing a little bit harder. But he pitched effectively, kept us off balance with the changeup, slider, curveball, fastball -- good location with all, just had us guessing all night."

Reddick had a different opinion of Oswalt.

"I don't feel he was very good," Reddick said. "I felt like we had a lot of swings and misses.

"We had a pretty good go at him. We saw a lot of pitches early. Just bad swings in front of the ball. I don't feel like his stuff was very far out there."

The bottom line is Oswalt is 3-1 with a 5.22 ERA and the Rangers have won four of his five starts. The one loss was against the White Sox, who tagged him for nine runs in 4 2/3 innings and bloated his ERA.

"If I could take a mulligan and throw out that one game, I feel like I'm throwing the ball pretty good," said Oswalt, who was signed to a Minor League contract at the end of May and made four starts in the Minors before being called up.

He was signed after the Rangers lost Neftali Feliz to a sprained right elbow in mid-May. Feliz has just started his medical rehabilitation assignment and could be ready to return by the first week of August. By then, the Rangers should have a better feel for Oswalt.

But his work on Tuesday night gave the Rangers their third victory in four games since the All-Star break. They lead the Angels by 5 1/2 games in the American League West. Oakland, which had won nine of 10, is nine back.

Josh Hamilton, after striking out three times, hit his 28th home run of the year on Tuesday, and Adrian Beltre hit his 17th. But just as important was the speed of center fielder Craig Gentry.

Gentry had two infield singles that helped stake Oswalt to a four-run lead after four innings against Oakland starter Bartolo Colon. Gentry's second-inning diving catch of Kurt Suzuki's shallow fly ball -- with two outs and a runner on third -- also kept the Athletics from being the first to score.

"With two outs and a runner at third, I was doing everything I could to get to it," Gentry said. "I was going to dive for it if I had to. Fortunately I was able to get a read off the bat and get to it."

The Rangers took a 1-0 lead in the third inning. Colon retired the first two batters and then got Gentry to hit a grounder to the right side. First baseman Chris Carter made a diving stop to his right, but Gentry outran Colon to the bag for a single.

Colon then tried to keep Gentry close and instead moved him to third with a wild pickoff throw past Carter. After Ian Kinsler walked, Elvis Andrus singled to right to bring home Gentry.

"That's what speed does for you," Washington said.

Gentry's RBI single off a suicide squeeze was also a big part of the Rangers fourth when they scored three more runs off Colon to give Oswalt a 4-0 lead.

Rangers watch market as Trade Deadline looms

By T.R. Sullivan

07/17/12

OAKLAND -- With two weeks to go before the Trade Deadline, three things are clear as far as the Rangers' position.

1. They are still hoping that their starting pitching will be good enough so that they won't have to make a blockbuster trade. Getting Colby Lewis and Neftali Feliz healthy are paramount to the process, and the Rangers are still evaluating Roy Oswalt.
2. They are aggressively staying on top of the trade possibilities in case they decide to make a move.
3. They will not hesitate to make a move because they remain committed to a "win now" mode.

"We're in the same spot as before," Rangers general manager Jon Daniels said. "We're getting healthy. We're getting Lewis back, we're getting a couple of [relievers] back in Oakland and Feliz is doing well. That's the biggest thing, getting all our guys back and getting a good read on them."

"Beyond that, we're always open if there is an opportunity to improve. But we're still in the same spot. I'm hoping we won't need to be real active because our guys are healthy and producing."

Daniels declined to discuss any specifics, but the Rangers know what's out there. They know that Phillies left-hander Cole Hamels and Brewers right-hander Zack Greinke are the two potentially biggest pitching prizes on the trade market. They are scouting and monitoring both. They know that the Cubs could move right-handers Ryan Dempster and Matt Garza.

The Rangers have strong interest in Hamels, knowing he would be a clear upgrade. They also know that the competition will be fierce. Two years ago they landed Cliff Lee from the Mariners for first baseman Justin Smoak, infielder Matt Lawson and pitchers Blake Beavan and Josh Lueke. A comparable trade this time around would be infielder Mike Olt, infielder Hanser Alberto and pitchers Justin Grimm and Johan Yan.

Both Hamels and Greinke are eligible for free agency at the end of the year. If the Rangers acquire one of them and then lose them to free agency, as they did with Lee, the new Collective Bargaining Agreement prevents the club from receiving Draft-pick compensation. Players have to be with a club for a full season in order to be subject to compensation.

That would unlikely deter the Rangers. Their goal is to win the World Series, and they would not fret over the lack of a Draft pick if they felt a particular player will help them achieve that goal.

Right now, the Rangers are trying to determine whether what they currently have is good enough to achieve that goal. If they decide it is not, they could get aggressive very quickly.

Rangers not likely to deal for offensive help

OAKLAND -- The Rangers' offense hasn't been as good as they hoped lately, but it's still unlikely to be an area of emphasis as the Trade Deadline approaches. The Rangers have a set lineup, and unless there is a major injury, they are prepared to stay with that group.

"I just don't see much we're going to do," Rangers general manager Jon Daniels said. "Our guys are our guys. Obviously they have been less consistent than you would like to see. The quality of at-bats haven't been great, but we still lead the league in runs. You could look at it either way.

"We're going to get Mitch Moreland [strained left hamstring] back. When he's right, he's capable of giving us quality at-bats. That's what we need right now, is guys doing what they're capable of doing."

Daniels did admit the Rangers are open to doing something to add more offense off the bench, rather than trading for a front-line player.

"That's one area that's fair to say we are looking at some different things," Daniels said. "The guys who have been in those roles have done a fine job. Our regulars don't get much time off and hopefully they stay healthy. Some of the guys on the bench haven't gotten an extended chance. But if the opportunity to bolster the bench is there, we're going to look at it."

Rangers cautious with Uehara

OAKLAND -- The Rangers' plan to activate reliever Koji Uehara off the disabled list on Tuesday was scuttled when Uehara reported some stiffness in the lat muscle in his right rib cage after pitching a scoreless inning for Triple-A Round Rock on Saturday night.

Uehara felt good after the game, but the stiffness set in on Sunday.

"We're not going to push it," Rangers manager Ron Washington said. "Once we take him off the disabled list, if something happens to him, he has to go back on for another 15 days."

The Rangers do not believe Uehara reinjured the muscle. They just feel he needs more time and he's not expected to throw for a couple of days.

"It might be just 3-4-5 days, just so he can let us know that he's good," Washington said. "It might not be anything. At least he's staying in communication and letting us know how he feels. Once he let us know about this, we shut him down."

Uehara is expected to pitch at least once more time on rehab assignment before he's activated. He has been sidelined since June 10 after posting a 2.10 ERA in his first 20 outings."

Napoli back in Rangers lineup

OAKLAND -- Rangers catcher Mike Napoli was back in the lineup on Tuesday after missing two games in Seattle because of a bruise above his right knee. He went through a series of agility drills early Tuesday afternoon without problem.

"He was fine before that," manager Ron Washington said. "Nap told me on Sunday if I needed him, he could go. I offered to DH him [Tuesday], but he's said he's ready to go."

"I'm good to go," Napoli said. "I'd rather catch. I love catching. Plus DHing here is tough. It's cold, no [batting] cage, nowhere to go. But that had nothing to do with it. I'd rather catch."

The Rangers are without catcher Yorvit Torrealba, who was placed on 72-hour paternity leave as his wife was due to give birth on Tuesday. He is expected to be back with the Rangers on Friday in Anaheim.

Luis Martinez remains with the Rangers as their backup catcher. The Rangers have a day game on Wednesday but Washington said he expects Napoli to start that game as well.

"If he gets out of tonight's game fine, he'll be ready to go," Washington said.

Worth noting

- Washington is going back to Michael Young in the fifth spot and Nelson Cruz in the sixth spot. Washington accidentally put Cruz in the fifth spot in Saturday's game after the All-Star break. Washington left him there after Cruz had a three-hit game, but he prefers Young in the fifth spot. Young was 8-for-17 in his last four games going into Tuesday.

- First baseman Mitch Moreland, on the disabled list with a strained left hamstring, went through a series of agility drills on Tuesday without any problem. The next test will be on Friday when Moreland works out for the first time since injuring the hamstring on June 19. He still hasn't run the bases at full speed, and that's usually the final test.
- The Rangers' game with the Angels on July 30 has been moved from 7:05 p.m. CT to 6:05 p.m. CT for a national telecast on ESPN. It will still be carried in the Dallas-Fort Worth market on FOX Southwest.
- The Rangers have announced their Minor League award winners for June. Frisco infielder Mike Olt (.325, 10 HR, 24 RBIs) was the Offensive Player of the Month, Myrtle Beach right-hander Kyle Hendricks (2-1, 1.78 ERA) was the Pitcher of Month, Frisco right-hander Ryan Rodebaugh (0.69 ERA, one save) was the Reliever of the Month and Myrtle Beach third baseman Christian Villanueva was the Defender of the Month.

Rangers activate Ogando

By T.R. Sullivan

07/17/12

OAKLAND -- The Rangers have activated Alexi Ogando off the disabled list but are not ready to do the same with fellow right-handed reliever Koji Uehara.

Uehara still has some tightness in the lat muscle in his right rib cage and is going to need more time on the disabled list. He has been sidelined since June 10 and pitched a scoreless inning on Saturday night for Triple-A Round Rock. That was his first and only appearance on medical rehabilitation assignment.

Ogando replaces catcher Yorvit Torrealba, who was placed on paternity leave and will miss the Rangers two-game series with the Athletics. He is expected to be back on Friday when the Rangers open a three-game series against the Angels. Mike Napoli, who missed two games in Seattle with a bruise on his right leg, went through agility drills on Tuesday and is expected to return to the lineup.

Ogando strained his right groin muscle running the bases in a game against the Giants on June 10. He is 1-0 with a 2.08 ERA in 28 games on the season and pitched three scoreless innings in two rehab assignments for Round Rock.

Pelicans' Jackson fans career-high 12

By Robert Emrich

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Batters often talk about the holes in their swings. Luke Jackson put holes in their bats Tuesday.

The Rangers' No. 16 prospect recorded a career-high 12 strikeouts and allowed one run on one hit over five innings as Class A Advanced Myrtle Beach defeated Wilmington, 7-2.

Jackson, who walked three and hit a batter, allowed only Juan Graterol's RBI single with one out in the second. He settled down and fanned the next six batters before Brett Eibner drew a one-out walk in the fourth.

"The biggest thing was that I was calm," Jackson said. "I was throwing strikes, Nick [catcher Brett Nicholas] was putting down the right fingers and I had the whole package tonight."

Jackson, selected 45th overall in the 2010 Draft, surpassed his previous high of 10 strikeouts, set on June 16, 2011 while pitching for Class A Hickory.

"When I would get to 0-2, I kind of amped it up a little more," Jackson said. "The curveball was there, Nicholas was blocking them all in the dirt. Besides that, I felt pretty good up there. I think it was split pretty evenly between fastball and the curveball, they both worked off each other pretty well."

Promoted to the Carolina League on June 25, Jackson (2-1) has allowed three runs or fewer in four of his five starts for Myrtle Beach.

"I've been flipping the switch from throwing to pitching and not over-amping on the fastball," the 20-year-old right-hander said. "I need to place it instead of amping it up."

"I just credit the catcher for the first two starts here; they were all right. The next one was rough and I've turned the page. Now I'm calm and collected instead of being wiry and all over the place."

Francisco Mendoza gave up two hits over two scoreless innings and Kyle Devore allowed a run on two hits over the final two frames for the Pelicans.

Nicholas went 2-for-4 with an RBI and Tomas Telis had three hits and drove in two runs.

Cheslor Cuthbert, the Royals' No. 5 prospect, slugged a solo homer for the Blue Rocks.

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

Oswalt comes through as Rangers dispatch Athletics

By Jeff Wilson

07/17/12

OAKLAND, Calif. — The trade deadline arrives in 13 days, and the Texas Rangers have proven the past two years to be anything but a team that sits out when a trip to the postseason is on the line.

They've done their homework on the starting pitchers who could be available at the end of the month, and any sign of weakness in the rotation could lead general manager Jon Daniels to pull off another big deal.

If there's no deal to be found, Neftali Feliz could be ready to start a big-league game by early next month.

Roy Oswalt, though, could end the trade speculation and send Feliz to the bullpen with a few more starts like the one he delivered Tuesday.

The right-hander cooled off Oakland over 6 1/3 innings, allowing only three hits, and Craig Gentry used his speed to make three critical plays early on to lead the Rangers to a 6-1 victory.

Oswalt's fifth start of the season was his best, as he changed speeds effectively and pitched inside against a team that had scored 24 runs the past three games.

He believes he is closing in on the level he has pitched at throughout an All-Star career. He will make two more starts before the July 31 trade deadline.

"I'm getting better," Oswalt said. "Overall, I felt pretty well. You keep building off the good ones. The more you throw, the better you're going to be." Adrian Beltre and Josh Hamilton hit solo homers as the Rangers scored more than four runs for the first time since June 30.

The victory allowed the Rangers to maintain their 5 1/2-game lead over Los Angeles in the American League West and helped stop the hottest team in baseball.

The loss was only the second of the month for the A's.

"It was important to come in and play the game the way we're capable of playing," Hamilton said. "It's was good. It's a quick series, but we want to win the two games and move on."

Gentry made a diving, run-saving catch to end the second inning and sparked a two-out rally in the third with an infield hit. He went to third on a throwing error by Bartolo Colon and scored on Elvis Andrus' single two batters later.

Beltre opened the fourth with his 17th homer, Michael Young followed with a single and Nelson Cruz doubled. After David Murphy bounced out, Mike Napoli delivered an RBI single for a 3-0 lead.

Gentry then beat out a squeeze bunt that drove in Cruz.

"That's what speed does for you," manager Ron Washington said. "He puts the balls in play and hustles down the line and made things happen."

Oswalt (3-1) survived a double and hit batsman to start the second with a double play and Gentry's catch. Those two at-bats started a stretch in which Oswalt would retire 13 of 14 before Josh Reddick homered on the first pitch of the seventh inning.

Oswalt would retire the next hitter before exiting after 103 pitches and only three hits allowed. He struck out six, including Yoenis Cespedes to end his night.

"I really didn't get tired tonight," said Oswalt, who threw 103 pitches. "I really wanted to get through the seventh. I knew I was getting close to 100 pitches. I was able to get fairly deep."

Oswalt believes that his body of work is decent enough, not including the nine earned runs he allowed July 3 against the White Sox in Chicago. He rebounded July 8 by allowing one run in 5 2/3 innings against the Twins.

The A's, though, weren't particularly impressed Tuesday.

"I don't feel he was very good," Reddick said. "It felt like we had a lot of swing and misses. We had a pretty good go at him. We saw a lot of pitches early. Just bad swings in front of the ball. I don't feel like his stuff was very far out there."

The A's put together a threat against Robbie Ross and Alexi Ogando after Oswalt exited, with the tying running batting twice, but Ogando got Kurt Suzuki and Brandon Inge to end the inning.

Hamilton would get back the run Oakland scored in the seventh with a leadoff homer to start the eighth. Hamilton, who struck out in his first three at-bats, has 28 homers this season, tied with Adam Dunn of the White Sox for most in the majors.

He then added a sacrifice fly in the ninth to raise his MLB-leading RBI total to 78 after Mike Adams survived a scare in the eighth. Oakland loaded the bases with one out, but Adams caught Cespedes looking, and Brandon Moss popped up to end the threat.

Alexi Ogando all set for Rangers; Koji Uehara suffers slight setback

By Jeff Wilson

07/17/12

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Alexi Ogando was back in the Texas Rangers' clubhouse Tuesday and was boasting before the start of a two-game series at Oakland that he could pitch two or even three innings.

Koji Uehara was also in the clubhouse but wasn't quite as boastful. He'll take two or three days before even throwing again after suffering a setback on the comeback trail.

Though the Rangers were expecting to have both right-handed relievers back in their bullpen against the white-hot A's, the day wasn't a total loss.

The return of Ogando gives the Rangers another proven power arm in the bullpen, one that can toss multiple innings and can fill in anywhere from the sixth to the eighth inning.

They didn't waste anytime turning to him, either.

The Rangers turned to Ogando on Tuesday in the seventh inning of a 4-1 game. He issued a walk to the first batter he faced but got Kurt Suzuki and Brandon Inge on pop-ups to end the A's threat.

"It just gives us another piece that we can depend on to come into the ballgames," manager Ron Washington said. "He's almost like a security blanket."

Ogando, who suffered a strained right groin June 10 in a spot start at San Francisco, was able to keep his shoulder active and stretched out during his layoff.

He pitched twice on a medical rehabilitation assignment, including two scoreless innings Saturday for Triple A Round Rock.

"I feel perfect. Nothing is wrong," Ogando said. "The last time I pitched I threw two innings and had no problems. I could even go three."

His return will take the load off the trio of Robbie Ross, Mike Adams and Joe Nathan, who at times seemed to pitch every time the Rangers had a lead while Ogando was out.

Adams and Nathan worked Friday in the second-half opener, and Nathan warmed Sunday when Matt Harrison encountered trouble in the ninth inning.

Though Ross in the first three games after the All-Star break, the rookie entered Tuesday tied for the league lead in relief innings (471/3). He allowed an infield hit to the only batter he faced Tuesday, and was replaced by Ogando.

"Now we might be able to use Ross for an inning instead of having him go out there for two innings," Washington said. "Or we might be able to bring him in to get a lefty out knowing that we've got Ogando."

Uehara said that he won't throw for a few days after feeling "a little pain" in his strained right lat. He worked an inning Saturday at Round Rock without any problems but felt tightness Sunday.

Washington said that Uehara will need another rehab assignment to prove that he's healthy. He could head out this weekend.

"We'll just go day to day," Washington said.

With Colby Lewis due back in the starting rotation today, Neftali Feliz rehabbing and Uehara expected to be delayed about a week, things continue to look up for the Rangers' pitching staff.

But their scouts continue to look at Philadelphia left-hander Cole Hamels and other starters who could potentially be available. The Rangers have no shortage of depth in the farm system, though they are unlikely to deal Double A shortstop Jurickson Profar.

Feliz is rehabbing as a starting pitcher but could find himself in the bullpen. That would likely be the case if Hamels were acquired or if Roy Oswalt struggles over the next few weeks ahead of the July 31 non-waiver trade deadline.

Oswalt, who entered his start Tuesday at 2-1 with a 6.26 ERA, said over the weekend that he is getting closer to the form that made him one of the top National League pitchers the past 10 years.

"In my last start my arm angle was a lot better," he said. "The pitches were getting a little better and not drifting back on me as much. We'll see how it works out."

Rangers expecting to make good use of paternity leave

By Jeff Wilson

07/17/12

Yorvit Torrealba was in Miami on Tuesday awaiting the birth of a daughter, and was the first Rangers players this season to go on the paternity leave list.

But he might not be the last, as the wives of first baseman Mitch Moreland and veteran Michael Young are also expecting.

Colby Lewis was the first player in the majors to use the list, which was created before last season, and Ian Kinsler and Alexi Ogando also used it. Some in the media have been critical of players missing time to be with their families.

"We shouldn't be allowed to have a family?" Kinsler said. "You do what you have to to take care of your family. That's the way it should be."

Moreland and his wife are planning to induce labor July 26, an off day during a homestand. That could keep him from needing the paternity list, as could the fact that he's on the disabled list.

Young's wife is due with the couple's third son in late August during a 10-game homestand that is followed by an off day Aug. 30. The list, which allows a player to leave his team for 72 hours and gives the team a chance to replace him on the roster, could be an option for him.

Manager Ron Washington has no problem with the paternity list.

"When I played, you weren't seeing your babies born," Washington said. "It's good for those guys to see their kids born and be there to support their wives."

Mike Napoli back behind home plate after sliding injury

By Jeff Wilson

07/17/12

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Mike Napoli returned to his spot behind home plate Tuesday night and is expected to catch this afternoon after a quick turnaround as the soreness near his right knee has dissipated.

The All-Star starter was injured Friday in the fifth inning after sliding into the shin guard of Seattle catcher Miguel Olivo. Napoli left the game after the eighth and didn't play the rest of the weekend.

The Rangers were off Monday, which he said also contributed to his return to health. There is still some swelling at the base of his quadriceps, but he went through a series of catching drills Tuesday afternoon with no issues.

Manager Ron Washington said that he gave Napoli the option to return as the designated hitter, but Napoli declined. "I'm good to go," he said. "I'd rather catch."

He said he would see how he feels this morning before committing to catcher today after a night game, but Washington said that Napoli would be in there.

Yorvit Torrealba is away from the team awaiting the birth of a daughter and was placed on the paternity leave list. Luis Martinez was recalled Saturday, but Washington would prefer to stay away from him.

Lewis also back

The Rangers will activate right-hander Colby Lewis and have him start today's series finale against Oakland, and he will do so without a pitch count despite not pitching since June 23 because of forearm tendinitis.

Lewis has thrown four bullpen sessions in the past 10 days, including two over the weekend at Seattle. He said that a 60-pitch bullpen over the All-Star break convinced him that his arm could handle a heavy workload.

"I wouldn't see any reason why I can't go out there and throw more than 100 pitches," said Lewis, who tossed a complete game but lost his only start this season against Oakland. "I'm looking forward to getting back out there. I pride myself on making my starts."

Young fifth again

Michael Young returned to the fifth spot in the Rangers' batting order after five games hitting sixth while Nelson Cruz hit one spot behind the cleanup hitter.

Ron Washington confessed that his own clerical error led to the switch June 7. He had written a lineup that day without Josh Hamilton in it, Young third and Cruz fifth. When Hamilton said he would play, Washington put Hamilton third, kept Cruz fifth and had to find a spot for Young.

"When I put Cruz fifth it was a mistake," Washington said. "He got off, so I left it like that."

Cruz had a big game as the Rangers snapped a five-game slide, so Washington stuck with it. Cruz, though, went 1 for 10 at Seattle, and Young is 8 for 17 his past four games.

"Michael is definitely getting better," Washington said.

Young entered the Oakland series in the top four among all-time A's opponents in hits (fourth, 258), runs (third, 129) and doubles (fourth, 47). George Brett, the Hall of Famer, rates in the top three.

Briefly

First baseman Mitch Moreland (left hamstring) could begin a rehab assignment Monday. He will go through a full set of fielding drills Friday and be evaluated Saturday before a decision is made.

The Rangers' home game July 30 against the Angels has been bumped up an hour to a 6:05 p.m. start to accommodate an ESPN national telecast. The game can also be seen locally on Fox Sports Southwest.

DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Rangers' Colby Lewis anxious to return after nearly month-long absence 0 0

By Gerry Fraley

07/18/12

Right-hander Colby Lewis attached no extra significance to his return from the disabled list to start Wednesday's series finale.

Lewis has been on the disabled list since June 24 because of forearm tightness. He did not go to the minors on an injury-rehab assignment while on the DL.

"I'm looking forward to getting back out there," Lewis said. "I pride myself on not missing starts, and I missed a couple."

This marked the first time Lewis had been on a major league disabled list since 2005, when he missed the final four months with Detroit because of rotator-cuff soreness. Lewis also missed a few starts in 2008 while with Hiroshima of the Japan Pacific League.

Washington said Lewis' performance will dictate how long he lasts. Lewis said he hopes to throw about 100 pitches and will be careful not to overthrow early.

"I'm going to do what I do best: get outs," Lewis said. "I don't want to throw 30 pitches in the first, that's for sure."

The Rangers will drop a pitcher to make room for Lewis on the active roster. Left-hander Martin Perez is the likely candidate to be returned to Round Rock.

Observation Central

By Gerry Fraley

07/18/12

Random observations from the Texas Rangers' 6-1 win against Oakland on Tuesday night at The Coliseum:

+ Josh Hamilton opened with three consecutive strikeouts but finished with two good plate appearances: a home run against left-hander Jordan Norberto in the eighth inning and a sacrifice fly in the ninth.

Batting coach Scott Coolbaugh told Hamilton early in the game that he was starting his swing too soon and as a result was coming off pitches. Hamilton did not put that into practice until he faced Norberto. Hamilton expected a slider and got it, taking it to the opposite field.

"I was looking slider, and that slowed me down enough to take a good swing," Hamilton said. "I had to get that figured out. It's something I've got to watch. You fight yourself some times. You're just kind of up there to be up there instead of being focused on every pitch like you need to be."

After the third strikeout, Hamilton dropped below .300 (.298) for the first time this season. The homer put him back at .300.

+ Mike Napoli returned after a two-game absence because of a bruised knee and had a landmark moment. With a single in the fourth, Napoli drove in someone other than himself (Michael Young) for the first time since June 3. He had only three RBIs in 89 at-bats since that game, all on homers.

"I felt better," Napoli said of his at-bats. "It's getting there."

Napoli said the knee condition did not limit him. He took another hard shot to the leg on a Josh Reddick foul ball in the fourth.

+ Setup reliever Mike Adams got into and out of trouble again. He loaded the bases with one out in the eighth by hitting Jemile Weeks on a 0-2 pitch, allowing a single by Seth Smith and walking Reddick on four pitches. That brought up cleanup hitter Yoenis Cespedes as the tying run.

Adams got out of it with the fastball. Cespedes took a called third strike, and Brandon Moss popped up to shallow left. The close-out pitch each time was a fastball.

"Adams sometimes puts himself in a lot of trouble, but he's always been able to get out of it," manager Ron Washington said. "I don't think he wants to have the bases loaded, but he didn't panic."

+ Washington had no qualms about putting right-hander Alexi Ogando into a pressure situation.

Ogando, in his first appearance since a month-long stay on the disabled list because of a strained groin, entered in the seventh with the Rangers up 4-1 and one runner on base. Ogando walked the first hitter, Chris Carter, before finding his command and putting away Kurt Suzuki and Brandon Inge on tame pop-ups.

"I thought that was an easy spot," Washington said. "He got us the two outs we needed. I didn't think he was too deep in the fire. Once we brought him back, I knew he was ready for whatever."

Fraley: Rangers' Michael Young can't pinpoint cause of slow start, but confident answers will come

By Gerry Fraley

07/18/12

OAKLAND, Calif. — Michael Young understands. More than halfway into the season, he is well below what is expected of him in the Rangers' offense.

"I would love to be in the situation where I usually am," Young said before the Rangers opened at two-game series against Oakland at the Coliseum on Tuesday night. "But I'm not going to sit here and dwell on games that already have been played.

"I'm going to make my adjustments and look forward to the games that are to be played. I always keep the same approach."

That approach has served Young well for more than a decade. For the previous 10 seasons, Young averaged .307 with 16 homers, 87 RBIs and a .454 slugging percentage.

He is well off that pace this season, with the most shocking decline in the power numbers. Young began the series against the Athletics hitting .272 with three homers, 35 RBIs and a .353 slugging percentage.

Young had 233 at-bats since his last homer, on May 7. Of the 266 major leaguers with at least 100 at-bats in that span, Young was tied for 193rd in RBIs with 16. Seattle's fading Ichiro Suzuki had the same total.

Is age the problem? Young is 35 years old, but he had one of his best seasons last year at .338 with 11 homers, 106 RBIs and a .474 slugging percentage.

Is impatience the problem? Young has only 17 walks, but he has rarely taken walks in his career. He has had more than 50 walks once since 2005.

Is the swing the problem? Several major league scouts who have recently watched the Rangers said Young is pulling off more pitches than ever before, a possible sign that he does not have full confidence in his bat speed.

When at his best, Young has remarkably quick hands that allow him to wait on pitches and hit them hard to the opposite field.

"I feel fine," Young said. "I still want to keep working hard and stay focused on the rest of the season. There's a lot of baseball to play. I'd like to think my best baseball is ahead of me."

Young recently has shown signs of coming out of the downturn. He started play hitting .344 with only two strikeouts in his last 32 at-bats. He went 4-for-11 in the weekend series at Seattle and hit the ball squarely in nearly every at-bat.

The average is slowly rising, but the power remains missing. Young had only two extra-base hits in his last 45 at-bats. The Rangers hope that as the average rises, the line-drive doubles will return, too.

"He's definitely had a lot more quality at-bats," hitting coach Scott Coolbaugh said. "You're seeing him hit the ball with more authority.

"It's just a matter of going out and trusting it. He's getting to that point now where he has that confidence."

Manager Ron Washington had Young back in the fifth spot after four games as the No. 6 hitter. Washington said Nelson Cruz's brief spin as the No. 5 hitter was in no way a sign of failing faith in Young. Washington made a mistake in filling out his lineup card on July 7 and had Cruz in the fifth spot. When Cruz had a productive game, Washington decided to stay with the look for a few games.

It is back to Young as the No. 5 hitter.

"Michael is definitely getting better," Washington said. "I believe all my guys are going to get it together and have a big second half. We're due as a group to have a big second half offensively."

Michael Young tops that list.

Fraley: Impressive start could be sign that real Roy Oswalt is emerging

By Gerry Fraley

07/18/12

OAKLAND, Calif. – The streak ended on Tuesday night, not that crisp right-hander Roy Oswalt needed what amounts to an offensive eruption by the Rangers these days.

Oswalt, in his best start yet with the Rangers, made what the mini-explosion hold up for a 6-1 victory against Oakland at The Coliseum. Oswalt carried a lead into the seventh inning, which is all the Rangers ask of their starters.

"He did an excellent job," manager Ron Washington said. "His mix was perfect."

Washington used four "winning pieces" relievers, including right-hander Alexi Ogando a few hours after coming off the disabled list, for the final eight outs. The Rangers are 48-3 when leading entering the seventh.

The Rangers had not scored more than four runs in the previous 10 games, their longest streak of offensive mediocrity since 1999. They cracked the elusive four-run barrier with Josh Hamilton's leadoff homer in the eighth. Hamilton struck out in his previous three at-bats, all against starter Bartolo Colon.

"I believe all my guys are going to get it together and have a big second half," Washington said. "We're due as a group to have a big second half offensively."

Oswalt gave up only three hits and matched a season-high with six strikeouts in 6 1/3 innings. His only glaring mistake was a high changeup that Josh Reddick drove for a leadoff homer in the seventh inning. Oswalt's biggest regret was not making it through seven innings for the first time this season.

"It's getting better and better," Oswalt said. "It helps out when you can rely on more than one pitch."

Oswalt's main complementary pitches, the slider and the changeup, were both good. He was able to keep both on the corners, putting hitters at a disadvantage.

Oswalt kept the ball down, getting eight ground-ball outs. He got strikes with the 70-mph big-bender curveball that hypnotizes hitters and had enough life on the fastball to get missed swings with it. He struck out the side in the fourth, using the fastball for the put-away pitch each time.

The changeup produced the biggest outs of the game. In a scoreless game, Oakland put runners at first and second with none out in the second inning. Chris Carter tried to pull a changeup that was sinking away from him and grounded into a double play.

In his first three starts, Oswalt allowed 35 hits and had a 7.79 ERA in 17 1/3 innings. After the abbreviated preparation of four minor-league starts, Oswalt may have been going through the spring-training staple of "dead arm" when he reached the majors.

He could be emerging from that stage. In his last two starts, Oswalt has allowed eight hits with a 1.50 ERA in 12 innings.

"I keep building form these games and get back to where I've been," Oswalt said. "The more you throw, the better you're going to be."

"Coming in halfway through the season, with most of the guys already seeing 250-300 at-bats and I'm trying to get something started, little bit of a difference. I'm getting stronger and pitching better."

How Oswalt and right-hander Colby Lewis, set to come off the disabled list to start on Wednesday, perform will help the Rangers shape their staff. Oswalt and Lewis will help determine whether right-hander Neftali Feliz returns from the DL as a starter or as a reliever, and whether the club will pursue a starter through trade.

The Rangers last faced Colon on June 6, and he shut them out for eight innings. The idea of responding to Colon never entered their collective thought process.

"If you go out against Bartolo too excited about he did last time, he's going to make you look worse," Washington said. "He's not overpowering, but he's very smart. You have to realize what he's trying to do and hope you can secretly make the adjustments without him noticing it."

Colon opened with eight consecutive outs before the Rangers took advantage of his weakness. Colon is not the nimblest of pitchers.

He badly lost a race to first base with center fielder Craig Gentry, who reached on a two-out infield single in the third. The effort of trying to cover the bag seemed to drain Colon. Gentry reached third on Colon's two-base throwing error on a pickoff try and scored on Elvis Andrus' single.

Colon never got it back. Adrian Beltre's leadoff homer started a flurry of five hits that led to three runs in the fourth. It was more than enough for Roy Oswalt and the bullpen's "winning pieces."

Oakland's Reddick unimpressed with Oswalt 0 2

By Gerry Fraley

07/17/12

Oakland outfielder Josh Reddick came away unimpressed on Tuesday night after his first look at Texas Rangers' right-hander Roy Oswalt.

"I don't feel like he was very good," Reddick told reporters. "I felt like we had a lot of swing and misses. We had a pretty good go at him."

"We saw a lot of pitches early. Just bad swings in front of the ball. I don't feel like his stuff was very far out there."

Reddick went 1-for-3 against Oswalt, driving in Oakland's only run in a 6-1 loss with a leadoff home run in the seventh inning. Oswalt gave up only three hits and had six strikeouts with no walks in 6 1/3 innings.

ESPNDALLAS.COM

Rapid Reaction: Rangers 6, A's 1

By Jeff Fletcher

07/17/12

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Roy Oswalt pitched his best game in a Texas Rangers uniform, allowing one run in 6 1/3 innings in a 5-1 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Tuesday night at the Coliseum.

What it means: The Rangers kept pace with the Angels and the Yankees, who both won. The Rangers remain 5 1/2 games ahead of the Angels in the AL West, meaning no matter what happens they will be in first place when they finish their series this weekend in Anaheim. The Rangers remain one game behind the Yankees in the race for the best record in the American League.

Oswalt's game: Oswalt had little trouble with an A's team that had hit nine homers and scored 24 runs in its previous three games. Through six innings, Oswalt had allowed just two hits, both to Yoenis Cespedes. In the seventh, he gave up a solo homer to Josh Reddick. He then struck out Cespedes before manager Ron Washington turned the game over to the bullpen.

Oswalt left after 103 pitches, including 72 strikes. He did not walk a batter for the first time in his five starts with the Rangers. He struck out six.

Gentry's wheels: Craig Gentry made some big contributions with his speed in the first few innings. He saved a run in the bottom of the second when he raced in and made a diving catch of a Kurt Suzuki blooper. He followed that in the top of the third by bunting for a hit when he beat pitcher Bartolo Colon to the bag. Colon then made an errant pickoff throw. As the ball shot into the vast foul territory in Oakland, Gentry went all the way to third. He scored on Elvis Andrus' single. In the fourth, he was called on to execute a suicide squeeze and he beat the play at first for a hit.

Beltre swings a hot bat: Adrian Beltre homered in the fourth inning, a solo shot that put the Rangers up 2-0. Beltre is hitting .394 over his last 27 games.

Hamilton snaps out briefly: Josh Hamilton struck out in his first three at-bats, running his slump to 2-for-26. In his fourth trip, against left-hander Jordan Norberto, Hamilton launched a homer to left field. It was Hamilton's 28th homer of the season, tying Adam Dunn for the league lead. He added a sacrifice fly in the ninth.

Ogando returns: Alexi Ogando, fresh off the disabled list, got into the game in the seventh inning with a three-run lead and a runner at first. Ogando, who had been out with a groin injury, walked the first batter he faced but then he got Suzuki and Brandon Inge on pop-ups to escape the jam.

Finally hitting Colon: The Rangers scored four runs against Colon, which was a welcome change. They managed just five hits and no runs in eight innings against Colon when they faced him in Oakland last month. Colon came into the game 18-6 with a 3.61 ERA against Texas, although most of those numbers were racked up when Colon was younger before he missed a couple years with shoulder problems.

Oops: Michael Young failed to score from third on a ground ball to second in the fourth, apparently a bad decision or a bad read on the ball. It didn't hurt the Rangers because Mike Napoli followed with an RBI single.

Up Next: Colby Lewis vs. Travis Blackley at 2:37 p.m. on ESPN Dallas 103.3 FM and FSSW. It's the final game of the quick two-game series.

Roy Oswalt looks to settle into groove

By Jeff Fletcher

07/18/12

OAKLAND, Calif. -- The Texas Rangers had seen flashes from Roy Oswalt in his first four starts with the team. But this was the real deal, the Oswalt the Rangers hoped they were getting when they signed him to a mid-season deal.

Even Oswalt admitted as much, conceding that this was his best of five starts so far in a Texas uniform.

"As far as commanding both sides of the plate, this was the best," Oswalt said after giving up one run in 6 1/3 innings in a 6-1 victory over the Oakland A's on Tuesday night.

Oswalt improved to 3-1. His ERA stands at 5.22, but he gave up nine earned runs in a July 3 start against the White Sox.

"If I could have a mulligan and take one out, I think I've pitched pretty well," Oswalt said.

Facing an A's team that was on a roll, Oswalt gave up just three hits and he did not walk a batter. He threw 103 pitches, including 72 for strikes.

"His mix was perfect tonight," Rangers manager Ron Washington said. "He moved the ball around, got on the outside part of the plate, the inside part of the plate. He threw some good breaking balls, some good change-ups. He just kept those guys off balance. That's what you have to do they are very aggressive when you throw the ball in the strike zone."

One of those A's hitters was not quite as impressed with Oswalt, though.

Josh Reddick, who provided the only run against Oswalt with a seventh-inning homer, didn't have much complimentary to say about the veteran.

"I don't feel he was very good," Reddick said. "I felt like we had a lot of swing and misses. We had a pretty good go at him. We saw a lot of pitches early, just bad swings in front of the ball. I don't feel like his stuff was very far out there."

Oswalt said he feels he can still be the pitcher he was in 2010, when he finished with 13 wins and a 2.76 ERA while pitching with the Astros and Phillies.

"That year was the best stuff of my whole career," said Oswalt, 34. "Last year I had a down year, went through some injuries here and there, fought through some stuff and everyone wrote me off. Hopefully I'll get back in the groove. My changeup is coming around my breaking pitch are coming around. I'm the same pitcher I was the last 12 years."

Judge Rangers, Mavs on level field

By Tim MacMahon

07/18/12

Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban went from parade leader to piñata when he made the post-lockout decision to let Tyson Chandler leave, essentially committing to remodeling the 2010-11 NBA champions' core on the fly.

It doesn't matter how many powder-preserving, financially savvy additions the Mavs make while restructuring Dirk Nowitzki's supporting cast. The Mavs' plan can't be considered a success until -- or unless -- they land a legitimate superstar to pair with Nowitzki for his prime's twilight before taking the torch as the face of the franchise.

Fair or not, after the Mavs were swept in the playoffs and whiffed on Deron Williams, the popular opinion is that the CBA-conscious approach by Cuban and Donnie Nelson is an epic failure.

Will Nolan Ryan and Jon Daniels face the same wrath if Josh Hamilton signs with somebody other than the Texas Rangers this offseason?

Doubt it. For whatever reason, the Rangers and Mavs aren't judged in the same light by locals.

Maybe it's because the Metroplex hasn't been spoiled by a long stretch of success by the Rangers, who had never won a postseason series until they miraculously morphed from a bankrupt franchise to a World Series team in a matter of months in 2010 and made a return trip to the Fall Classic the next year.

Maybe it's because Ryan's status as a record-setting legendary pitcher earns him extraordinary respect. All due respect to Cuban for getting his butt kicked at WWE events, but a generation of fans didn't grow up in awe of his athletic prowess.

However, if you're fighting mad about the Mavs not paying up for Chandler, you should be equally irate if the Rangers don't match any offer that Hamilton gets.

OK, so it's not a perfect comparison.

Heck, Hamilton is a perennial All-Star who might win his second MVP in a three-season span this year. Chandler's next All-Star appearance will be his first.

Hamilton has spent almost all of his major league career in Texas, serving as a centerpiece of by far the most successful stretch in Rangers history. Chandler was a one-year rental for the Mavs, a final piece in a puzzle that was coming off 10 consecutive 50-win campaigns.

With no salary cap in baseball, the Rangers' spending is restricted only by the budget set by an ownership group fronted by Ryan and backed by a pair of billionaires.

The filthy rich Cuban's decision went down after he combed over the new collective bargaining agreement, which will make luxury-tax teams pay much more than before while handcuffing their ability to upgrade the roster.

Perhaps it would be prudent for the Rangers to just wish ol' Hambino good luck with his goal of helping a hurting world if some free-spending team steps up with an offer in excess of five years and/or \$150 million, market value for an MVP candidate. After all, it's tough to rely so heavily on a player who tends to miss games by the bunch.

Then again, Chandler missed more than 40 percent of his teams' games the two seasons before the Mavs traded for him, which is why the Charlotte Bobcats were willing to dump him for the easily disposable Erick Dampier contract. That didn't stop the New York Knicks from signing him for near-max money (four years, \$58 million), while the Mavs were only willing to pay big on a one-year-at-a-time basis.

Hey, Ryan and Daniels have earned the benefit of the doubt. They rescued a floundering franchise, turning the Rangers into a team that has been to the World Series the last two seasons and is widely expected to win it all this fall.

All Cuban and Nelson have done is turn the NBA's laughingstock of the 1990s into one of four teams in league history with a decade-plus 50-win streak, capped by a parade through downtown Dallas.

Not that the championship banner hanging in the American Airlines Center means the Mavs should get a pass. At this point, a perfectly rational argument can be made that the Mavs' best chance to win another one was to bring Chandler back to man the middle for a hopeful repeat run.

If you pick that side, that's cool. Just stick with it, and save some of that wrath for the Rangers' brass.

Tip pays off for Josh Hamilton

By Jeff Fletcher

07/18/12

OAKLAND, Calif. -- After Josh Hamilton struck out in his first two at-bats Tuesday night, hitting coach Scott Coolbaugh gave his star pupil a little tip. Coolbaugh said Hamilton was getting going a little too early at the plate. He needed to slow down.

Although Hamilton still struck out in his next at-bat, the tip clicked after that. Hamilton hit an opposite-field homer in the eighth and a rocket to right field for a sacrifice fly in the ninth.

After the Rangers' 6-1 victory over the A's, Hamilton said it's not uncommon for him to have to slow himself down at the plate.

"It's something I have to watch from time to time, even when I'm doing well," he said. "I might get a couple hits and then next at-bat start too early. It's just a visual thing. I have to focus on doing it every at-bat, every pitch."

Hamilton said it helped that he was facing a lefty, Jordan Norberto, who he expected to throw a slider.

"I was looking slider," Hamilton said, "and it slowed me down enough to make a good swing on the fastball, not pull off it and stay through."

Hamilton's 29th homer got his average back to .300 after the third-inning strikeout had dropped it below that threshold for the first time since he was 0-for-1 on opening day. His average had been plummeting with a .220 slump over his previous 46 games.

Hamilton insisted he didn't notice the batting average on the scoreboard.

"I haven't paid attention," he said. "I know it's going down the last month, month and a half. I know it's going to end up where I'm supposed to end up. I will get hot here a couple times. I'm not really panicking."

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rangers' Roy Oswalt confident after confounding A's: 'I'm getting close'

By AP Staff

07/17/12

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Roy Oswalt threw one curveball clocked at 57 mph. His fastball hit 91.

In vintage Oswalt style, the right-hander used his wide-ranging repertoire to baffle Oakland's batters and beat the Athletics for the first time, leading the Texas Rangers to a 6-1 victory Tuesday night.

Oswalt worked ahead and painted the corners the like pitcher of old at age 34.

"That's me, that's my game," Oswalt said. "I'm the same pitcher I've been the last 12 years."

Josh Hamilton and Adrian Beltre each hit solo home runs for Texas.

Elvis Andrus, Craig Gentry and Mike Napoli hit RBI singles off Bartolo Colon (6-8) for the AL West-leading Rangers, who snapped the A's four-game winning streak and avenged a June loss to Colon in the Coliseum.

Oswalt (3-1) struck out six and didn't walk anyone in 6 1-3 innings, retiring 15 of the final 17 hitters he faced in his fifth start of the year and first against the A's. The crafty right-hander had never beaten Oakland in two previous outings, including a loss at the Coliseum on June 7, 2002.

This time, he did it by mixing speeds and pitches to keep Oakland's hitters off balance. He struck out Seth Smith to end the sixth on a 71 mph off-speed offering.

While Oswalt would have liked to finish the seventh, he knows he is making progress with every appearance since signing a minor league deal May 29 before his call up on June 22.

"I'm getting close. I feel better," he said. "The hitters have 300 at-bats behind them and have seen a lot of pitchers, and I'm trying to get up to speed."

The Rangers won for the fifth time in six games but just the third time in their last seven road contests.

Hamilton struck out three times before connecting for his 28th home run to lead off the eighth. He added a sacrifice fly in the ninth. The All-Star slugger kept his average right at .300, and hasn't dipped below that mark all season.

"I hadn't really paid attention to it. I knew I was going down the last month to month and a half," Hamilton said. "I'm not really panicking at all."

Josh Reddick homered for the A's, who had some momentum after a three-game sweep at Minnesota only to come home and face the two-time reigning AL champions. Oakland missed an opportunity with the bases loaded in the eighth.

Reddick didn't consider Oswalt's night all that special even though the A's managed just three hits against the veteran pitcher.

"I don't feel like he was very good. I felt like we had a lot of swing and misses," Reddick said. "We had a pretty good go at him. We saw a lot of pitches early. Just bad swings in front of the ball. I don't feel like his stuff was very far out there."

Colon, who tossed eight scoreless innings to beat the Rangers on June 6 in the Coliseum, was tagged for eight hits and four runs in seven innings. He remained winless in three starts since coming off the disabled list from a strained oblique muscle. He fell to 2-6 at home this season and hasn't won in four outings since June 12 at Colorado.

The right-hander is 18-7 against Texas in 29 career starts for his most wins against any opponent — and 19 would have matched Hall of Famer Bert Blyleven, Dennis Leonard and Jack Morris for most by any pitcher.

In Texas' three-run fourth started by Beltre's 17th home run, the Rangers scored on a squeeze when Colon fielded the ball and opted not to throw to first when second baseman Jemile Weeks appeared slow to cover the bag.

Oakland, 9-2 in July, failed to move four games over .500 for the first time since May 31, 2010. The A's have never won their first four games after the All-Star break.

Oakland slugger Yoenis Cespedes, nursing a sprained left thumb, doubled among his two hits as designated hitter and hopes to be back in the outfield Wednesday afternoon if he is able to put his hand in the glove without discomfort. He struck out for the second out of the eighth.

Oswalt struck out the side in the fourth, when he gave up only a single to Cespedes.

The bottom of Oakland's order isn't producing.

"You have to stick with guys," manager Bob Melvin said. "We've been pretty good offensively even though some guys have been struggling. When guys aren't hitting you expect the rest of the lineup to be able to pick you up."

NOTES: Rangers 1B Mitch Moreland, on the 15-day DL since June 22 with a strained left hamstring, did baseball activity and is scheduled to do extensive work fielding groundballs Friday with the hopes he will begin a rehab assignment Monday. ... A's OF Coco Crisp was out of the lineup for a third straight game with a sore left shoulder he aggravated on Friday night at Minnesota. Crisp hit and did baseball work and could be in the lineup Wednesday. He saw a doctor and has no structural damage. ... LHP Brett Anderson, recovering from Tommy John elbow reconstructive surgery, faced hitters Monday in a three-inning simulated game and will throw a bullpen session Wednesday. If all goes well, he will begin a rehab assignment with Class-A Stockton this weekend. ... Oakland opening day RHP starter Brandon McCarthy (strained throwing shoulder) will throw a bullpen Wednesday. ... The Rangers are scheduled to activate RHP Colby Lewis

(6-6) from the DL to start Wednesday afternoon against LHP Travis Blackley (2-2). ... A's OF Jonny Gomes received the "Heart & Hustle Award" in a pregame ceremony. ... A's reliever Jim Miller rejoined the team after he and wife, Tasha, welcomed son, Ethan James, on Thursday in Virginia.

AUSTIN AMERICAN STATESMAN

Three straight hits with 2 outs lift Express in 11th
Compiled from News Reports
07/17/12

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Three straight two-out singles from Joey Butler, Tommy Mendonca and Luis Hernandez in the top of the 11th inning gave the Round Rock Express a 5-4 victory over the Nashville Sounds on Tuesday night at Herschel Greer Stadium.

The Express snapped a five-game losing streak and eclipsed their run total from the previous four games combined.

Nashville led 4-2 entering the top of the ninth inning, but the Express sent the game to extra innings with a pair of runs on two hits and a costly error by Sounds third baseman Taylor Green.