



*Clips*

**(April 11, 2016)**

**Today's Clips Contents**

*FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES (Page 3)*

- **Angels get the production they need in win over Rangers**
- **Jered Weaver recaptures some former glory, if not velocity, in Angels' 3-1 win over Texas**

*FROM THE OC REGISTER (Page 6)*

- **Weaver and his 84 mph fastball help Angels split series with Rangers**
- **Angels' A.J. Achter surprised, pleased to get call up**
- **On deck: Angels at A's, Monday, 7 p.m., FSW**

*FROM ANGELS.COM (Page 11)*

- **Point proved: Crafty Weaver stymies Rangers**
- **Weaver, situational hitting lead Angels to win**
- **Angels shifting more than any club in baseball**

*FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS (Page 16)*

- **Angels' Weaver beats Rangers in season debut 3-1**

*FROM THE LA DAILY NEWS (Page 18)*

- **LA Angels' Andrelton Simmons is a go-to guy defensively**

*FROM FOX SPORTS WEST (Page 20)*

- **Jered Weaver passes Nolan Ryan on Angels' all-time wins list**

*FROM CBS SPORTS (Page 21)*

- **Angels-Athletics Preview**

*FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES***Angels get the production they need in win over Rangers**

Mike DiGiovanna

The Angels are still waiting for an offense that ranked second in the major leagues with an .844 on-base-plus-slugging percentage in spring training to emerge — through six regular-season games, they are batting .203 with 12 runs and a .179 average (seven for 39) with runners in scoring position.

But at least they timed their hits — and some outs — well on Sunday, bunching three of their seven hits in the third inning and using two productive outs to eke out a 3-1 win over Texas.

Johnny Giavotella and Yunel Escobar singled off Rangers starter Martin Perez to open the third, and both runners advanced on Craig Gentry's bunt. Mike Trout's run-scoring dribbler to third and Albert Pujols' RBI single to left gave the Angels a 2-0 lead.

The Angels tacked on a run in the seventh when Geovany Soto singled, Escobar walked, Gentry was hit by a pitch and Trout hit a sacrifice fly to right for a 3-1 lead.

Relievers Fernando Salas, Joe Smith and Huston Street combined to give up one hit and strike out four in three scoreless innings to preserve the win for Jered Weaver.

**Comeback trail**

Tyler Skaggs took another significant step in his return from reconstructive elbow surgery Sunday, giving up one earned run and three hits, striking out one and walking two for triple-A Salt Lake against Sacramento. It was the left-hander's first competitive game since he hurt his elbow July 31, 2014.

Skaggs struggled with his command for two innings but looked sharp in the third. Two of the three hits he gave up were bunt singles. His fastball was clocked from 92 to 94 mph, and of his 42 pitches, 26 were strikes.

Skaggs will need at least three or four more minor league starts before being considered for the Angels rotation, but with the team looking to limit him to between 165-175 innings, he may get some extra rest between starts.

**Men down**

The Rangers absorbed a pair of body blows Sunday when right-fielder Shin-Soo Choo (right-calf strain) and catcher Robinson Chirinos (fractured right forearm) were placed on the disabled list.

Chirinos, injured when he was hit by a Garrett Richards pitch Saturday, will be sidelined for 10-12 weeks. Choo, hurt while running in the outfield before Saturday's game, will be out for four to six weeks.

Called up from triple A were highly touted prospect Nomar Mazara, who singled twice and homered on Sunday, and catcher Brett Nicholas. Mazara, who turns 21 on April 26, is the youngest player in the major leagues.

### **Short hops**

The Angels claimed hard-throwing right-hander Danny Reynolds off waivers from Houston and sent him to double-A Arkansas, where he pitched most of the last two seasons. Reynolds, 24, spent six years in the Angels farm system before being claimed by the Dodgers and then the Astros last December.

Scioscia expects Daniel Nava (lacerated left index finger) to start in left field against Oakland right-hander Sonny Gray on Monday night.

## **Jered Weaver recaptures some former glory, if not velocity, in Angels' 3-1 win over Texas**

Mike DiGiovanna

His ire raised and his arm slot dropped, Jered Weaver found a happier medium between the dominant right-hander that he "guaranteed" would return this season and the cranky, stiff-necked veteran whose fastball — and career — appeared to be in steep decline this spring.

This version of Weaver won't garner Cy Young Award votes, as he did as recently as 2012, but it was plenty good enough to lead the victory-starved Angels to a 3-1 win over the Texas Rangers on Sunday.

Weaver, mixing and locating his sinking fastball, curve and changeup with precision, allowed one run and six hits in six innings, striking out four and walking one, to improve to 11-0 with a 2.23 earned-run average in 18 career starts against Texas at home.

He also earned his 139th career victory, passing Nolan Ryan for sole possession of second place on the franchise's all-time wins list.

"I didn't come here for personal accolades, I came to win championships, and today's win was a step in getting to that goal," Weaver said. "With that being said, it's very humbling to be put in the same sentence as guys who have done great things for this organization."

Weaver, 33, has played a key role on four American League West-champion teams since 2007, but his fading fastball and a career-worst 7-12 record and 4.64 ERA in 2015 fueled doubts he would be a front-of-the-rotation starter again.

Slowed by neck and shoulder stiffness this spring, he struggled to hit 80 mph with his fastball, which had dropped from an average velocity of 86.3 mph in 2014 to 83.3 mph in 2015, according to Fangraphs.

But Weaver lowered his arm slot just enough to find a more comfortable delivery and release point, and he felt so good about a four-inning simulated game last Tuesday that he vowed to prove his detractors wrong.

"Haters equals motivation for me," Weaver said. "I feed off of it."

Weaver seemed far more in-control than angry on the mound on Sunday, but he did gain some velocity on his fastball, which sat in the 82-mph range and hit 84 mph four times during his 84-pitch outing.

His success stemmed from his ability to keep the Rangers off balance and a competitive edge he has maintained despite his less-than-electric stuff.

"He's a workhorse, man," catcher Geovany Soto said. "He'll give you everything he's got. He's coming after you at all times, no matter how many guys are on base, who's hitting, what the count is. That's one of the things I didn't quite see in spring training, but it was great to see today."

The difference, Weaver said, is his health. His neck and shoulder were so stiff in mid-March that he could barely turn his head, but he has loosened up with physical therapy and stretching exercises.

"The arm slot is coming back," Weaver said. "There's no tightness in my shoulder, no tightness in my back, no tightness in my hip. I'm feeling healthy. I can pitch like this for the rest of the season, but I know it's only going to get better."

Improved health has led to a better state of mind.

"It makes me look forward to the future in baseball," Weaver said, "as opposed to thinking about shutting it down."

The only player to bother Weaver on Sunday was 20-year-old right fielder Nomar Mazara, who had two singles and hit a fifth-inning solo home run to center field in his major league debut.

Weaver pitched out of a two-on, one-out jam in the first, striking out Mitch Moreland looking at a tailing, 81-mph fastball. He escaped a two-on, no-outs jam in the fourth by retiring Elvis Andrus (fly to right), Hanser Alberto (pop to short) and Bryan Holaday (strikeout).

Weaver struck out Delino DeShields looking at a slow curve and Prince Fielder looking at a changeup in the fifth.

"It's almost like facing a knuckleballer in some ways," Texas Manager Jeff Banister said. "He throws the breaking ball and the fastball at different speeds and the slider that goes down and away, and it's challenging for us. He's not what you see every day."

Weaver's strong 2016 debut helped the Angels (2-4) avoid their worst start in club history and gave them a boost heading into a 10-game road trip to Oakland, Minnesota and Chicago.

It also provided a much-needed shot in the arm to a rotation that has lost left-handers Andrew Heaney and C.J. Wilson to injury, is waiting for Tyler Skaggs to return from elbow surgery and includes struggling right-hander Matt Shoemaker.

"He had a tough time finishing pitches and executing pitches this spring," Manager Mike Scioscia said. "But where he is today is much further ahead from where he was in the middle of the spring, and that's encouraging. He'll keep getting better."

*FROM THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER*

## **Weaver and his 84 mph fastball help Angels split series with Rangers**

By JOEY KAUFMAN / STAFF WRITER

ANAHEIM – Jered Weaver heard the same question from the same chorus for most of spring training.

Can a big-league starting pitcher still get outs, even with a fastball that fails to move much past 80 mph?

At least on Sunday afternoon at Angel Stadium, the answered appeared to be yes.

Weaver delivered a gutsy performance in his season debut, giving up six hits and one run over six innings, in the Angels' 3-1 victory over the Texas Rangers to split a four-game series.

"I can pitch like that for the rest of the season," Weaver said, "but I only know it's going to get better."

The Angels improved to 2-4 and avoided what would have equaled their worst start through six games in franchise history.

The veteran right-hander, who broke in with the Angels in 2006 and is the club's longest-tenured player, faced questions as his velocity kept dipping and he suffered from neck tightness. He missed one Cactus League start for what was described as degenerative changes in cervical spine.

By this point, he said the tightness subsided.

"It makes me look forward to the future in baseball as opposed to thinking about shutting it down," Weaver said.

Weaver looked crisp against the Rangers, striking out four and walking one as he faced major-league hitters for the first time since March 25. At one point, he retired seven straight batters from the first inning into the third.

"It's been talked about to exhaustion, about velocity," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "When he hits his spots, he's effective."

Against the Rangers, Weaver threw 84 pitches and his fastball hit 84 mph four times, according to PITCHf/x, while sitting 82 mph. In the spring, scouts clocked his heater around 79-81 mph in the spring. At its height, Weaver's fastball was averaging 91 mph in 2008.

Of his pitches, 67 percent went for strikes. He relied on a mix of stuff, a curveball that hit 75 mph and dropped to 63 mph, as well as a slider and changeup.

"He had really great bite on his breaking pitches," catcher Geovany Soto said.

The lone run he gave up came in the fifth inning when Nomar Mazara crushed a first-pitch changeup to center field, traveling more than 400 feet. The 20-year-old outfielder, considered the Rangers' top prospect, was called up from Triple-A earlier in the morning to replace Shin-Soo Choo, who was placed on the disabled list with a strained calf.

As Weaver took the mound to begin the sixth, having thrown 78 pitches, he appeared to be in some trouble, hitting Mitch Moreland to start off. But he induced a pop out and 6-3 double play to end the inning.

"He's a workhorse, man," Soto said. "He'll give you everything he's got, anything, any count. He's aggressive coming after you."

"I think Jered always pitches with an edge," Scioscia added. "He loves to compete."

For Weaver, it was his 16th career win against Texas, the most against any team, and in 18 starts at Angel Stadium against the AL West rival, he remained perfect, improving to 11-0.

The biggest distinction, though, was that his 139th career win surpassed Nolan Ryan on the Angels' all-time list.

"I didn't come here for personal accolades," Weaver said. "I came here to win championships. Today's win was a step in getting to that goal. With that being said, it's very humbling to be put in the same sentence as guys who have done great things for this organization."

The Angels put Weaver in line for the win in the bottom of the third inning, as Johnny Giavotella and Yunel Escobar led off with a pair of singles, before advancing to third and second base on a sacrifice bunt that Craig Gentry dropped.

In the next at-bat, Mike Trout grounded out to third base, but Giavotella scored, giving the center fielder his first RBI of the season. Albert Pujols capped the short rally with an RBI single to left field.

Trout brought in another run in the seventh inning on a sacrifice fly. Through six games, he is 4 for 20.

Closer Huston Street, who retired all three batters he faced in the ninth inning, earned his first save of the season.

## **Angels' A.J. Achter surprised, pleased to get call up**

By JOEY KAUFMAN / STAFF WRITER

ANAHEIM – A.J. Achter was about to turn in Friday night around midnight. He had finished brushing his teeth. Then his cell phone buzzed.

The Angels were calling up the reliever from Triple-A.

"I wasn't really expecting it," Achter said. "It was a phone call that was a pleasant surprise, that's for sure."



He hurried to the ballpark in Salt Lake to pack his gear and make the early-morning flight to join the Angels by Saturday to finish their weekend series against the Texas Rangers.

"It was a quick turnaround," he said.

In the 4-1 loss to Texas, Achter threw a scoreless ninth inning, striking out one batter and setting down all three he faced. He did not appear Sunday.

The Angels called up Achter, 27, to help alleviate the workload for the bullpen, which has thrown 221/3 innings in six games. Only the Oakland Athletics and Arizona Diamondbacks have turned to their relievers more often.

In December, the Angels signed the right-hander after the Philadelphia Phillies designated him for assignment.

He had previously spent six seasons in the Minnesota Twins organization after he was drafted out of Michigan State in the 46th round in 2010. In 19 major-league appearances, he has 4.97 ERA with 20 strikeouts to 9 walks.

To add strength and durability, "to be more consistent and attack hitters more," Achter said he worked out in the offseason with Dan Jones, the strength and conditioning coach for the Toledo Walleye, part of the East Coast Hockey Leagues. He grew up in nearby Oregon, Ohio.

"The things we did were very practical for pitchers," he said.

### **SKAGGS THROWS IN MINORS**

Tyler Skaggs, who is working his way back from Tommy John surgery, made his first start of the season at Triple-A Salt Lake on Sunday afternoon.

Over three innings, Skaggs threw 42 pitches, gave up three hits and one run, struck one and walked two.

The left-hander twice pitched two games in relief for the Angels during spring training, lasting two innings and three innings, respectively, in the two outings.

"It's a process with Tyler, a process in a lot of different areas," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said Sunday. "First and foremost, it's just repeating his pitches, refining. It looks like he's on his way to that, but it's a process."

Scioscia did not provide a timeframe for when Skaggs could return to the majors, where he last pitched in 2014. The season, he went 5-5 with a 4.30 ERA in 18 starts.

He will likely see his workload progressively increase over the month of April.

“There’s a lot of data to help our medical team make a better decision of what he needs and what he needs to monitor as far as his workload,” Scioscia said. “I think there’s a plan to step him up and a plan to see him back pitching for us at some point if he pitches to his capabilities.”

#### **NAVA AVAILABLE**

Daniel Nava, who suffered a laceration on his left index finger Friday and was considered day to day as a result, is expected to return to the lineup on Monday night when the Angels begin a 10-game trip against the Oakland Athletics.

“I would anticipate him being ready tomorrow,” Scioscia said.

Nava has not been in left field since the injury.

The Angels face a right-handed starting pitcher, Sonny Gray. Nava, who hits left-handed, is part of a left-field platoon with Craig Gentry, a right-handed batter.

### **On deck: Angels at A’s, Monday, 7 p.m., FSW**

By JOEY KAUFMAN / STAFF WRITER

**Where:** O.co Coliseum

**TV:** Fox Sports West, 7 p.m.

**Did you know?** The Angels have won 17 of their past 24 games against Oakland, including eight of 11.

#### **THE PITCHERS**

##### **RHP NICK TROPEANO (3-2, 3.82 in 2015)**

Vs. Athletics: 2-0, 0.71

At O.co Coliseum: First appearance

Hates to face: Josh Reddick, 2 for 5 (.400)

Loves to face: Stephen Vogt, 1 for 6 (.167)

##### **RHP SONNY GRAY (1-0, 1.29)**

Vs. Angels: 5-2, 3.18

At O.co Coliseum: 18-12, 2.99

Hates to face: Yunel Escobar, 3 for 9 (.333)

Loves to face: Kole Calhoun, 5 for 29 (.172)

### **UPCOMING MATCHUP**

**Tuesday:** Angels LHP Hector Santiago (0-0, 3.00) vs. Athletics RHP Kendall Graven (0-1, 3.38), 7 p.m., FSW

*FROM ANGELS.COM*

### **Point proved: Crafty Weaver stymies Rangers**

By Alden Gonzalez / MLB.com | @Alden\_Gonzalez | April 10th, 2016

ANAHEIM -- Geovany Soto had only caught Jered Weaver in the carefree environment of Spring Training, where results don't matter and intensity must be simulated. Then the veteran catcher crouched for Sunday's series finale against the Rangers, which just so happened to coincide with Weaver's regular-season debut, and Soto immediately noticed something different.

He saw "a guy with a chip on his shoulder."

Weaver faced doubt like never before as he entered his 11th season, most of it centered on a fastball that sat in the 79-81-mph range throughout March. But as real games drew closer, he grew increasingly steadfast in his belief that he could continue to be an effective starting pitcher.

And when his turn finally came, he showed why, holding a mighty Texas lineup to one run through six innings of the Angels' eventual 3-1 win.

Afterward, Weaver remained curt.

Asked how it felt to be so effective, Weaver simply said: "I pitched like I did for the last 11 years."

Asked if he proved anything to himself, the Angels' longtime ace looked off in the distance and muttered: "I always knew I could pitch."

Weaver's fastball sat anywhere between 79 and 84 mph, the latter of which is a marked improvement. He mixed in some mid-60s curveballs, sprinkled some low-70s changeups and biting sliders. And he made it all work with precise command and masterful pitch selection, the type that makes one believe Weaver can continue to give this team a chance every fifth day.

"I can pitch like that for the rest of the season," Weaver said, "but I only know it's going to get better."

Weaver stranded six baserunners, gave up a solo home run -- to Nomar Mazara, the rookie outfielder who totaled three hits in his Major League debut -- and struck out four. He notched his 139th victory, passing Hall of Famer Nolan Ryan for second on the Angels' all-time wins list. And he finished his start with 1,499 career strikeouts, one away from becoming the sixth active pitcher to reach 1,500 with one franchise.

More important was what Weaver might have proven.

"He loves to compete," said Mike Scioscia, the only Major League manager Weaver has ever known. "Right now, in this point in his career, where he was last year and where he is this year, there's no doubt he's out to prove that even though he's not throwing the ball quite as hard as he did even two or three years ago, he can go out there and be effective. You saw it today."

With two on and one out in the first, Weaver got Adrian Beltre to fly out and froze Mitch Moreland with a glove-side, 81-mph fastball painted perfectly on the inside corner. With two on and one two out in the third, he got Beltre way out in front on a 73-mph curveball, causing a grounder that popped up and hit Beltre on his way to first base. With two on and none out in the fourth, he got Elvis Andrus to fly out, Hanser Alberto to ground out and Bryan Holaday to swing through another 73-mph curveball.

Beltre said "sometimes you would rather face a guy throwing 94 in the middle of the plate than guys who throw 80 on the corners.

"He knows how to paint. He is tough, especially in this ballpark."

Weaver is now 11-0 with a 2.23 ERA in his career against the Rangers at Angel Stadium, and there's a reason for that. The spacious outfield is conducive to his fly-ball tendencies and the left-center-field rock pile is located almost precisely behind the point where baseballs leave his right hand.

Soto was taken aback by the confidence Weaver exhibited in the pitches he threw.

"He's coming after you at all times," Soto said. "No matter how many guys are on base, who's hitting, he's coming after you. That's one of the things I didn't quite see in spring."

Weaver sat at mostly 79 mph in a March 9 start against the Dodgers, then complained of neck tightness and was temporarily shut down. Later in spring, he said that "about 80 percent of the league wouldn't have been throwing with what I've been throwing the last couple years" and expressed frustration that he couldn't get healthy.

Said Weaver: "Nobody has had any answers."

As the regular season drew nearer, though, Weaver got healthier and began to find his arm slot. By Sunday, he said, the tightness in his shoulder and hip and back had subsided, giving him hope for what may lie ahead.

"It makes me look forward to the future in baseball," Weaver said, "as opposed to thinking about shutting it down."

## **Weaver, situational hitting lead Angels to win**

Texas Rookie Mazara knocks three hits, including homer, in MLB debut

By Alden Gonzalez and T.R. Sullivan / MLB.com | April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016

ANAHEIM -- Jered Weaver entered his 2016 season with something to prove, and on Sunday, in his debut against the hard-hitting Rangers, the Angels' longtime ace made a statement.

With a fastball that topped out at 84 mph and a breaking ball that was thrown in the mid-60s, Weaver used pinpoint control and masterful pitch selection to hold the Rangers to just one run through six innings, setting the tone in the Angels' 3-1 victory in the series finale.

"He exemplifies pitching," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said of Weaver, now 11-0 with a 2.23 ERA in his career against Texas at Angel Stadium. "I think it's been talked about to exhaustion, about velocity. When he hits his spots, he's effective."

The Rangers -- who got three of their hits, including a homer, from rookie Nomar Mazara in his MLB debut -- put two runners on in the first, third and fourth innings but never scored, leaving lefty Martin Perez with the loss.

Perez issued five walks and surrendered seven hits, but was charged with just three runs in 6 1/3 innings. The Angels picked up a couple of runs in the third, on a run-scoring groundout by Mike Trout and an RBI single by Albert Pujols. Trout tacked on an additional run with a sacrifice fly in the seventh as the Angels evened the four-game series.

"The walks -- that's what I need to work on," Perez said. "I don't want to give up free bases. I need to attack hitters and pound the strike zone."

The Rangers sit 3-4 and will now head to Seattle for a first-week rematch against the Mariners. The Angels, who begin a 10-game road trip on Monday, finished the first week of the season 2-4.

Said Weaver: "Any time you get a win, in the position we were in, either to tie this series or lose a series, it's nice to get a win."

## MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

**Making it work:** Despite all the questions centered on his velocity and overall health, Weaver shined in his 2016 debut, stranding six baserunners to keep the Rangers to only one run in a six-inning, 84-pitch performance. Weaver threw his fastball anywhere from 79 to 84 mph, mixing in a 72-73-mph changeup and breaking balls in the mid-60s. He struck out four and walked one.

"He's a workhorse, man," Angels catcher Geovany Soto said. "He'll give you everything he's got. Anything, any count, he's aggressive coming after you. That's what stood out. He's coming after you at all times. No matter how many guys are on base, who's hitting, he's coming after you. That's one of the things I didn't quite see in spring, but it was great to see today."

**Mazara the Magnificent:** Mazara singled in his first two at-bats. Then he came up in the fifth inning and launched a 79-mph pitch from Weaver deep into the center-field seats for his first Major League home run. The exit velocity was 105 mph, and the Statcast™ projected distance was 443 feet. Mazara is the eighth Rangers player to hit a home run in his Major League debut and the fifth to have a three-hit game. Joey Gallo had a three-hit game in his debut last year.

"I just wanted to have fun," Mazara said. "Everything seemed normal. That's why I was able to enjoy the game."

**Closing the door:** A slim lead meant Angels manager Mike Scioscia got to deploy his late-game strategy for the first time this season. Fernando Salas took the ball in the seventh, pitching a 1-2-3 inning to pave the way for Joe Smith and Huston Street. Cliff Pennington checked in for second baseman Johnny Giavotella for defense. The Angels' bullpen allowed just one baserunner in the final three frames, striking out four.

**Clutch hitting failure:** The Rangers were 0-for-7 with runners in scoring position on the afternoon. The fourth inning stood out. Mitch Moreland and Ian Desmond led off the inning with singles, putting runners on first and second. Elvis Andrus followed with a fly to right that moved Moreland to third. But Hanser Alberto, swinging at a first-pitch 72-mph changeup, popped out, and Bryan Holaday struck out to end the inning.

"I still feel like we had an approach that was solid," Rangers manager Jeff Banister said. "[Weaver] reads at-bats very well and he reads batters very well. He has been around a long time and is a smart pitcher. You've got to get him over the plate and he doesn't give in. It has to be a patient approach."

## QUOTABLE

"It makes me look forward to the future in baseball, as opposed to thinking about shutting it down." -- *Weaver, on alleviating tightness in his shoulder, hip and back, which allowed him to pitch well against the Rangers*

### **SOUND SMART WITH YOUR FRIENDS**

Sunday's victory marked Weaver's 139th career win, passing Hall of Famer Nolan Ryan for second place on the club's all-time list. Chuck Finley is the Angels' leader with 165. Weaver also finished the afternoon with 1,499 career strikeouts. Only five active pitchers have amassed 1,500 with one franchise -- Matt Cain, Felix Hernandez, Clayton Kershaw, Tim Lincecum and Justin Verlander.

"I didn't come here for personal accolades," Weaver said. "I came here to win championships. Today's win was a step in getting to that goal. With that being said, it's very humbling to be put in the same sentence as guys who have done great things for this organization."

### **WHAT'S NEXT**

**Rangers:** The Rangers open a three-game series with the Mariners at 9:05 p.m. CT Monday at Safeco Field. Right-hander Colby Lewis pitches for the Rangers, who lost two of three to the Mariners last week in Arlington. Hisashi Iwakuma starts for Seattle.

**Angels:** Nick Tropeano takes the ball opposite A's ace Sonny Gray when the Angels travel to Oakland to begin a three-game series at 7:05 p.m. PT on Monday. Tropeano is taking the rotation spot of an injured Andrew Heaney (left forearm tightness).

## **Angels shifting more than any other team in baseball**

By Alden Gonzalez / MLB.com | @Alden\_Gonzalez | April 10th, 2016

ANAHEIM -- The Angels aren't just shifting their infield defense more frequently this season.

They're shifting more than anybody in baseball.

FanGraphs recently began to publicize shift data and showed that the Angels had employed some semblance of a shift 79 times through their first five games, 13 more than the second-place Astros -- widely considered one of the more analytically inclined teams in the industry -- and 76 more than the last-place Red Sox.

New general manager Billy Eppler has installed an analytics team that has the Angels shifting against both left-handed and right-handed hitters, but also depending on the count, the situation and the pitcher on the mound.

They're averaging 15.8 shifts per game, after averaging 4.0 (19th in the Majors) in 2015, 2.4 (18th) in 2014, 1.7 (15th) in 2013 and 1.0 (16th) in 2012, according to data provided to FanGraphs by Baseball Info Solutions.

Those numbers include "traditional" shifts and "non-traditional shifts." As defined by Baseball Info Solutions, "traditional" shifts include three infielders on one side of the field, two players positioned significantly out of their normal position or one infielder playing deep into the outfield. "Non-traditional" shifts are any situational shifts not covered under those guidelines.

The additional shifts are especially beneficial to the Angels because they usually field two subpar defenders on the right side of their infield in first baseman C.J. Cron and second baseman Johnny Giavotella. Both have made strides defensively, with Cron moving his feet better and Giavotella seemingly more confident. But, as Angels manager Mike Scioscia said, "Our ability to shrink the field, as that improves, will absorb some of players' pressure to have to go outside their range."

Worth noting

- Tyler Skaggs, working his way back from Tommy John surgery, pitched three innings of one-run ball in his debut for Triple-A Salt Lake, giving up three hits and two walks while striking out one. The 24-year-old left-hander threw his fastball in the 92-94-mph range. Prior to the game, Scioscia said, "It's a process with Tyler. A process in a lot of different areas. First and foremost just to repeat his pitches. It looks like he's on his way with that, but there's a process."
- Hard-throwing reliever prospect Dan Reynolds has returned to the Angels' system. The Angels claimed Reynolds off waivers Sunday, shortly after he was designated for assignment by the Astros, and sent him to Double-A Arkansas. Reynolds was claimed off waivers by the Dodgers in early December, then subsequently claimed by the Astros a couple weeks later. He had a 4.57 ERA with the Angels' Double-A affiliate last year, but struck out 10.4 batters per nine innings.

## *FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS*

### **Angels' Weaver beats Rangers in season debut 3-1**

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- It sounds as if a delayed start to the season for Jered Weaver was a wise call.

Weaver pitched six effective innings, and the Los Angeles Angels beat the Texas Rangers 3-1 on Sunday to earn a split of the four-game series.



"I was happy to get back out there. I pitched like I did the last 11 years," said Weaver, whose outing was held up because of nerve problems in his neck and shoulder. "My arm slot is coming back. There's no tightness in my shoulder, no tightness in my back, no tightness in my hip, so I'm feeling healthy."

"It makes me look forward to my future in baseball, as opposed to maybe thinking about shutting it down. I can pitch like that for the rest of the season, but I know it's only going to get better."

Mike Trout got his first two RBI of the season and Albert Pujols singled home a run for Los Angeles, which bounced back after losing two in a row.

Weaver (1-0) allowed a run and six hits in his 139th career win -- passing Nolan Ryan for second on the franchise list behind Chuck Finley's 165.

"I didn't come here for personal accolades. I came here to win championships. And today's win was a step toward getting to that goal," Weaver said. "But with that being said, it's very humbling to be put in the same sentence as guys that have done great things for this organization."

Weaver also improved to 11-0 with a 2.22 ERA in 18 career starts against the Rangers at Angel Stadium.

"It's kind of tough facing Jered. He's not what you see on an everyday basis for our hitters," Texas manager Jeff Banister said. "He's been challenging for us in the past. It's almost like facing a knuckleballer at times. You know the velocity is not there, but he makes his pitches. We had limited opportunities today and didn't capitalize on them."

The defending AL West champions put two men on base in three of the first four innings, helping run Weaver's pitch count up to 64. In the fourth, the three-time All-Star struck out Bryan Holaday with runners to second and third.

Fernando Salas and Joe Smith each pitched a scoreless inning before Huston Street worked a perfect ninth for his first save.

Texas left-hander Martin Perez (0-1) was charged with three runs, seven hits and a career-worst five walks in 6 1/3 innings. Two of the hits were on line-drive singles off his body by Andrelton Simmons in the second and Yunel Escobar in the fifth.

#### MAZARA'S DAY

Nomar Mazara, 20, made his major league debut for the Rangers, singling his first two times up and hitting a first-pitch homer to center field his next time at-bat in the fifth. He batted second

in the order and started in right field for Shin-Soo Choo, who was placed on the 15-day disabled list Sunday because of a strained calf muscle.

Mazara became the eighth player in Rangers history to homer in his first big league game.

"I knew nothing really about him, except that he kind of had a long swing," Weaver said. "He had a good approach today. It took me more than three at-bats to figure him out. He did a good job of keeping his hands back and dunked a couple in. The fastball in to him (on the home run) was not a bad pitch. He just did a good job of getting his hands inside of it and put a good swing on it."

#### TRAINER'S ROOM

Rangers: Choo, whose injury occurred while he was running on the wet outfield grass after batting practice on Saturday, is expected to be out at least four to six weeks. ... C Robinson Chirinos was placed on the 60-day DL because of a broken right forearm, and is expected to be sidelined approximately 10 to 12 weeks.

#### UP NEXT

Rangers: RHP Colby Lewis (0-0) opposes Hisashi Iwakuma on Monday night in the opener of a three-game series at Seattle.

Angels: RHP Nick Tropeano makes his season debut Monday night against Sonny Gray in the opener of a three-game set at Oakland. Tropeano was recalled on Thursday from Triple-A Salt Lake after LHP Andrew Heaney went on the DL with a flexor muscle strain.

#### *FROM THE LA DAILY NEWS*

### **LA Angels' Andrelton Simmons is a go-to guy defensively**

*By Dave Thorpe, Daily Breeze*

When the Angels gunned down Elvis Andrus at home plate during the fourth inning of a 4-1 loss to the Rangers on Saturday, it showed a glimpse of why the team acquired shortstop Andrelton Simmons.

Texas' Ryan Rua hit a liner in the gap to left-center field and Andrus tried to score from first base. Angels left fielder Craig Gentry relayed the ball to Simmons, who showed a quick release coupled with a strong, accurate two-bounce throw to catcher Carlos Perez, who made the tag in time to get Andrus.

“When we went through spring training doing those drills, his arm was a little tender, and then as we got to the end of spring training we saw the relay arm and release,” Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. “We were told it’s the best relay arm you are going to see from a shortstop, as far as the quickness, the release, the carry, and we saw a glimpse of that yesterday. There’s no doubt about us trying to save some bases, and he’ll be a big part of that on cutoffs and relays, too.”

Simmons, who was acquired last November from Atlanta along with catcher Jose Briceno for Erick Aybar and pitchers Sean Newcomb and Chris Ellis, led all National League players in defensive runs saved (25) for the third straight season. Scioscia almost views Simmons like an offensive coordinator would a star wide receiver.

“We’re going to try to get him the ball as many times as we can wherever it’s hit,” Scioscia said. “There’s more plays that a shortstop can get involved in when you have the athleticism of Andrelton.”

#### SKAGGS’ PROCESS

With Andrew Heaney joining C.J. Wilson on the disabled list with a flexor muscle strain in his pitching arm, the Angels could use some pitching help. The Angels called up Nick Tropeano, while Tyler Skaggs is slated to get more starts at Triple-A Salt Lake. Skaggs showed glimpses of what he can do in 2014, when he went 5-5 with a 4.30 ERA during an injury-plagued season. He missed the entire 2015 season recovering from Tommy John surgery, which was performed Aug. 13, 2014.

Skaggs could eventually be a big help to the rotation, but it does not sound like they are in a big hurry to bring him up to the big club.

“His process is a little more complicated, not only him trying to come out here and make our team out of spring training, but coming off Tommy John surgery, to be able to get his pitches back, get to where he needs to be, there is a process involved,” Scioscia said. “I think there is a plan to step him up and a plan to see him back up pitching for us at some point if he pitches to his capabilities.”

#### ESCOBAR’S ERROR

Third baseman Yunel Escobar lofted a ball over the head of first baseman C.J. Cron on Saturday in the seventh inning after charging and fielding a groundball by Andrus, who eventually scored. Escobar is expected to be an upgrade defensively at third base for the Angels this season, and Scioscia still believes he will be. No reason to be concerned over one error, as surprising as it may have been. Escobar is a former shortstop, but became the Angels’ seventh different Opening Day third baseman in the last eight years this season.

"He just needs to move his feet. (Infield coach) Alfredo (Griffin) talked to him," Scioscia said. "You can see from when Spring Training started to now, he feels much more comfortable at third base. That's just one that got away. He'll be a plus defender for us at third base."

*FROM FOX SPORTS WEST*

### **Jered Weaver passes Nolan Ryan on all-time wins list**

On Sunday, Jered Weaver picked up career win No. 139 moving him into No. 2 on the Angels all-time wins list

By Vince LaRosa

Haters gonna hate. Jered Weaver is ok with that. In fact, he thrives on it.

Much has been made of Weaver's velocity-challenged fastball leading up to this season but on Sunday the 33-year-old quietly went out and picked up his 139th win as an Angel. The win moves him past hall of famer Nolan Ryan for second all-time on the team's wins list.

While it may have been fitting that Weaver passed Ryan by defeating the Texas Rangers -- Ryan finished his career with the Rangers -- his performance Sunday was the antithesis of Ryan's flamethrowing style.

Showing that smarter is sometimes better than harder, Weaver topped out at 84 mph but changed speeds so effectively that Rangers' bats rarely found solid contact. Rookie Nomar Mazara's was the only Ranger to make solid contact on any of Weaver's pitches hitting a solo home run in the fifth inning. The masterclass in pitching ended after six innings with Mazara's homer the only run surrendered.

Weaver's 139th win comes with 40 fewer losses than Ryan had with the Angels but 143 fewer complete games -- which is more a sign of how baseball has evolved since Ryan played than anything.

Angels lefty Chuck Finley remains at No. 1 on the team's all-time wins list with 165. While the Angels would love for Weaver to challenge for that mark this season, it would likely take a minor miracle for the righty to even come close being that his career best season win total was 20 back in 2012.

Then again, go ahead and keep doubting Weaver. That's exactly what he wants you to do.

*FROM CBS SPORTS***Angels-Athletics Preview**

**Time:** 10:05 P.M. EST **Venue:** O.co Coliseum

Though it's uncertain if the Los Angeles Angels have unlocked a secret to solving Sonny Gray, they've certainly turned their fortunes around in recent meetings with the right-hander.

Seeking their first back-to-back wins, the visiting Angels hope to extend that success Monday night when they face the ace in the series opener against the Oakland Athletics.

Yunel Escobar had two hits and Mike Trout drove in two runs in Sunday's 3-1 home win over Texas that snapped a two-game losing streak. The Angels (2-4), however, have gotten off to a slow start offensively with just 12 total runs, a .200 batting average and an AL-low eight extra-base hits.

Normally, that wouldn't bode well heading into a matchup with Gray, who went 14-7 with a 2.73 ERA en route to finishing third in the AL Cy Young Award voting last season.

Gray is 4-1 with a 2.57 ERA in his last eight home starts, but his only setback was a 9-4 loss to the Angels in September. Since going 5-1 with a 2.18 ERA in his first eight starts versus Los Angeles, he's given up 12 runs over 11 innings in the last two.

After he was scratched from his opening day start due to food poisoning, Gray (1-0, 1.29 ERA) shined in his 2016 debut by allowing one run and three hits despite walking four over seven innings of Wednesday's 2-1 home win over the Chicago White Sox.

"He's so polished, it's crazy," reliever Ryan Madson told the league's official website. "He reminds me of a right-handed Cliff Lee, for the way he pounds the zone where he's just real aggressive in the strike zone throughout the whole game, and that's tough to do as a starter."

Now Gray will try to lead the A's (4-3) to a fourth straight win after Coco Crisp's solo shot in the 10th inning on Sunday gave them a 2-1 road win and a three-game sweep at Seattle.

Albert Pujols went 5 for 15 versus Gray last season, including a two-run shot in September. Trout was 1 for 14 with five strikeouts and C.J. Cron was hitless in six at-bats.

Pujols and Cron have struggled so far, going a combined 5 for 46 (.109) over the first six games. Pujols, however, has hit .349 with five homers and 16 RBIs in his past 11 against the A's, while Trout has batted .396 with three home runs and 14 runs over his last 14.

The Angels hope to provide some run support for right-hander Nick Tropeano, who was recalled from Triple-A Salt Lake to replace the injured Andrew Heaney in the rotation.

Tropeano, who went 3-2 with a 3.93 ERA in seven starts last season, has surrendered one run and eight hits while striking out 16 over 12 2-3 innings to earn the win in both outings with Oakland.

"You don't want to see anyone get injured, especially a friend or a teammate," Tropeano said. "I'm here just to contribute, help the team win."

He'll have to be cautious with Stephen Vogt, who has hit .429 with four extra-base hits and six RBIs in his last seven games against the Angels. Marcus Semien, who homered Sunday, is batting .364 with a home run during a six-game hitting streak in this series.

Oakland dropped 11 of 19 meetings last season, including five of nine at home.