

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

### Tracking

It looks like the Angels and A's have gotten into the habit of tracking each other. Oakland is having its worst stretch run in five years, losing regularly rather than infrequently, but the Angels aren't doing much better, so the Green and Gold still lead things in the West by two games, despite a 12-9 loss to the Rangers last night in which the offense did its job but the pitching, particularly that of Mark Redman, failed spectacularly.

Anyone hoping that Redman would turn into Ted Lilly down the stretch has certainly had those hopes dashed. All in all, the trading away of Lilly to acquire Bobby Kielty, followed by the move to get Redman and sign him for three years, has turned out disastrously. Lilly is pitching like a maniac in Toronto while Kielty and Redman have been non-factors in the best of times and terrible in the worst.

Sure, Redman's has pitched well on the road, but when you can't even be adequate at home, you're giving away half of your games. He'll be in the bullpen in the playoffs, and I hope he only pitches in the two games the A's could potentially have in Boston in the first round.

Of course, it wasn't all Mark Redman last night. Newly re-arrived Justin Lehr came in to follow the big lefty and gave up four runs in two innings. Sure, Justin Duchscherer also gave up a run in the ninth, but if Lehr had managed to pitch as well as the Duke instead of as poorly as Method Man's sidekick, the A's would have had a much better chance of winning the game and going up three on Anaheim.

There's no sense dwelling too much, though. The ever-sliding Mark Mulder pitches tonight for Oakland against Ryan Drese. Mulder's fighting a battle to keep his ERA under four, a battle he won his last time out with a seven-inning, three-run performance against Cleveland that didn't get enough offense support to produce a win. Mulder's had one good game and one bad against the Rangers, while Ryan Drese, the Ranger starter, pitched poorly in his one start against the A's, but had a good 4.1 inning relief appearance earlier in the year.

With Ryan Franklin pitching against the Angels tonight, the A's are probably going to have to win their game to maintain their lead.

Posted by jason in Baseball, Oakland A's at 06:48