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Friday, April 15, 2005

Blue Jays, 5, A's 2 -- A's 6, Blue Jays 3

The A's lost again to Toronto on Tuesday before coming back with another series-closing win on Wednesday. That makes Oakland 0-3 in series openers, 1-2 in middle games, and 3-0 in closers. This, of course, is the reverse of the reputation the team has acquired for its playoff struggles from 2000 to 2004, where they won early and lost late. Of course, these nine games are just a little indication of the team's overall ability as those playoff games were.

Tuesday's game featured the A's taking an early lead on a two-run Nick Swisher double and Danny Haren pitching a decent game (four runs in seven innings), but Josh Towers shut Oakland down after Swisher's hit, leading to a 5-2 loss. Swisher, by the way, is struggling to make contact early, batting just .235 with 10 strikeouts in 35 plate appearances, and he's walked just once, but he's hitting for power: a double and three homers out of eight total hits give him an Isolated Slugging of almost .300. Obviously, he's not going to keep that up, but there are some positive signs in the early part of the season for Swisher.

One of Swisher's homers came in the bottom of the sixth on Wednesday, tying the score at one after Reed Johnson had popped a homer in the top half of the inning. Oakland later took the lead in that inning, only to have Huston Street relinquish it in the top of the seventh, but a rally in the eighth gave the A's a four-run lead, rendering the run Octavio Dotel gave up in the ninth meaningless and giving Kiko Calero his first win as an Athletic.

ARC

MVOP for 4/12: Nick Swisher, 1.1511, who was the only offensive player with a positive ARC for the day. That's ugly.

MVOP for 4/13: Jason Kendall, 1.5756, who had his first extra-base hit as an Athletic and knocked in a couple of runs.

LVOP for 4/12: Jason Kendall, -1.1253, for going 0-4 (with a couple of strikeouts) in the third spot in the order.

LVOP for 4/13: Erubiel Durazo, -0.6721, with an 0-4 in the cleanup spot on a day when the three guys ahead of him got on base a combined six times.

MVP for 4/12: Dan Haren, 0.6383, who learned that one little three-run homer can ruin an otherwise fine day.

MVP for 4/13: Joe Blanton, 2.2274, who had a very nice 6-inning start, throwing just 77 pitches in the effort. Were he a veteran, even one of two or three years' experience, he probably would have pitched the seventh inning at least. No complaining when the A's win the game, though.

LVP for 4/12: None.

LVP for 4/13: Huston Street, -0.8982, who gave up a run and had the second out of his inning come on a caught-stealing (which I decided for the sake of simplicity in the system, not to credit to the pitcher).

Standings

MVOP:

Mark Ellis, Nick Swisher -- 2

Marco Scutaro, Jason Kendall, Eric Byrnes, Mark Kotsay, Erubiel Durazo -- 1

LVOP:

Erubiel Durazo -- 4

Mark Ellis, Jason Kendall, Bobby Kielty, Marco Scutaro, Nick Swisher -- 1

MVP:

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Huston Street, Dan Haren -- 2

Kiko Calero, Kirk Saarloos, Joe Blanton, Justin Duchscherer, Rich Harden -- 1

LVP:

Barry Zito -- 2

Ricardo Rincon, Kirk Saarloos, Huston Street -- 1

Relievers

The updated run-differential rankings are:

Rincon 2.33

Duchscherer 2.75

Calero 3.00

Cruz 3.00

Dotel 6.00

Street 6.25

Yabu 7.50

Pages

I'm going to update the sidebar a little later today to add a stats section so that these numbers that I post will be available in a plain, non-blog form for viewing at any time.

Posted by jason in Baseball, Oakland A's at 08:40