

Blog Export: Beaneball, <http://beaneball.org/>

Thursday, April 28, 2005

A's 2 - White Sox 1

Things are getting crazy in Oakland! An umpire actually ruled that a batter didn't make an attempt to get out of the way of a pitched ball and did not allow that batter to go to first base. I complain constantly about this rule not being enforced at any level of the game. One time, when I was pitching in a Little League All Star game in Santa Cruz, the rule was actually enforced: I hit a guy with a knuckleball, but the umpire ruled that the batter had made no attempt to move and refused him the base. I attribute his call to my loud complaining (I worked the umps when I was 14, man!) after an earlier hit batter didn't move either. He gave that one the base, but got the call right the next time. There's not much incentive for a batter to try to move out of the way of an errant knuckleball unless the umpire is going to call the rule as it should be, and I'll always remember him for that.

In this case, it was Joe Crede leaning into a Justin Duchscherer pitch. Ozzie Guillen, the White Sox manager, got tossed for arguing and Joe Crede managed to last the at-bat, but got tossed for arguing after he popped up.

What made Crede's ejection worse for the White Sox is that Juan Uribe, Tadahito Iguchi, and Pablo Ozuna could not play, leaving the team with no shortstops. Guillen started Crede at short instead of his usual third, and put Chris Widger, a backup catcher, at third, a position he'd seen nary an inning of in his long and winding major league career. When Crede was ejected, the Sox were forced to go with Jermaine Dye at short! Dye's major league career to date included 9 games in center field, 27 in left, and 966 in right. Never before had he ventured into the infield dirt, not even for an inning of first base or something, and here he found himself playing the most important infield position.

What I find a little weird is that they didn't move Willie Harris over from second to short at this point. Sure, Harris has never played short in the majors, either, but at least he's spent half of his career at second base, which is closer to the six than spending 95% of your career in right field. Of course, they would have then been left with the problem of filling second base, but I'd rather put Dye (or Timo Perez, or whatever other random fill-in you choose) at second than short late in a tied ballgame.

Let's not forget that, by the way! Like last year's epic Red Sox-Yankees tilt when Gary Sheffield wound up playing third base, this game wasn't over. The two starting pitchers, Freddy Garcia and Kirk Saarloos, had dueled, each in their own way: Garcia by being traditionally effective, giving up just six baserunners in seven innings, for one run; Saarloos by relying on his defense, getting 13 ground ball outs, including three double plays (and benefitting from one more DP to erase some runners he left on base for Huston Street).

The game came down to defense in the end, just like yesterday. You might expect a base hit that Jermaine Dye couldn't get to or something, but instead, Erubiel Durazo reached on a fly ball that Aaron Rowand, generally an average defensive center fielder, lost in the sun. After a sacrifice and an intentional walk, Marco Scutaro came through with the game winning hit into left field off Dustin Hermanson.

Is it any wonder A's fans love Scutaro? He's a decent-to-good defensive infielder with a .389 on-base percentage! Granted, he won't keep that OBP up, but he's a spare part anyway, and when you get that kind of production from your fill-ins, you're supposed to end up with a decent offense. Fifth worst in MLB in runs scored, you say? I guess it can't work all the time.

What the hell's the deal with the sacrificing, by the way? Ken Macha made Mark Ellis sacrifice Erubiel Durazo from first to second with no outs twice! Granted, the second time, it "worked" in that Durazo scored the winning run, and also granted, Ellis isn't hitting that well (.317/.321 OBP/SLG), but, recalling James Click's findings from last May (sub. req.), he doesn't hit enough like a pitcher to justify bunting the runner from first to second, especially in the seventh inning, when maximization of run scoring should still be the goal, rather than maximization of the probability of pushing one baserunner across.

Standings

With a tightly-bunched, early-season, four-team division, you get funny results like the A's jumping from a tie for last into a tie for second in one day. As of right now, the teams are lined up in the order I predicted for them. On the other hand, I didn't figure the A's would be in second place but be outscored by eleven runs (out of just 173 total scored, remember).

Blog Export: Beaneball, <http://beaneball.org/>

ARC

What's ARC?

MVP for 4/27: Huston Street, who worked out of a sixth inning jam and pitched a scoreless seventh.

LVP for 4/27: Nobody in the negative. Ricardo Rincon was closest.

MVOP for 4/27: Erubiel Durazo, though that's helped out by his "single" in the ninth. I won't quibble about whether certain kinds of errors should be errors or not, but the difference between his performance and Marco Scutaro's is small enough that a catch by Rowand makes a difference there. On the other hand, if Rowand catches that ball, Scutaro doesn't have the chance to hit the RBI single to win the game. Maybe he gets a hit, but it likely doesn't earn him enough ARC to win the MVOP title for the day. We could do this all day.

LVOP for 4/27: Scott Hatteberg, who hit into a huge inning-ending, bases-loaded double play in the eighth amidst going 0-4.

Don't forget to keep checking out the ARC page, linked in the right sidebar in the Stats section.

Relievers

Macha's usage rating remains the same, though Street pitching in a tie game yesterday moved him up the usage rankings a spot. Rincon is still pitching in close games. That's all you need to know.

Don't forget to keep checking out the reliever page, linked in the right sidebar in the Stats section.

Adjusted Standings

The A's record is above their performance in all respects and are thus looking at something like a 76-win season. That said, you have to doubt they'll actually play like this the rest of the year. When they'll start playing like their capable, I have no idea.

Don't forget to keep checking out the Adjusted Standings page, linked in the right sidebar in the Stats section.

Posted by jason in Baseball, Oakland A's at 12:49