

Friday, July 1, 2005

A's 6, Seattle 2

The A's just keep on rolling with another win last night, beating Seattle for the third straight night. Dan Johnson popped his second big league homer, so that's neat, and Dan Haren, while his numbers come out as unimpressive as his stuff apparently was, pitches just well enough to only allow two runs in six innings. Oakland's next standings target? Getting past the winning percentage of the Arizona Diamondbacks.

If you'll notice the Actual Runs Created page on the right, you'll see that Bobby Crosby has jumped all the way up to second most valuable hitter, behind only Bobby Kielty. This is partially a result of Mark Kotsay's recent slump, but it's also a result of Crosby pounding the hell out of the ball. He was the other Athletic to homer last night, making a two-run game into a four-run one in the eighth. This deprived Huston Street of a save opportunity, but that's ok. I'll take a win of any stripe any day.

The White Sox are up next, and this has a lot of fans worried, I bet, that the A's will be exposed for frauds who beat up on bad teams but can't beat good ones. We'll see, I guess. The first pitching matchup is Jose Contreras against Rich Harden. It's nice to have the A's going in the opening game, but I always worry about the ability of a guy like Contreras to come in and shut Oakland down without ever throwing a ball in the strike zone. Scott Hatteberg and Dan Johnson may get their walks, but I wouldn't be surprised to see three strikeouts apiece from Bobby Kielty and Nick Swisher tomorrow.

On Saturday, Jon Garland goes against Kirk Saarloos, which is about as unscintillating as a pitching matchup gets. Garland gives up slightly fewer home runs than the league average and also strikes out and walks significantly fewer batters than your run-of-the-mill AL hurler. The lack of walks helps, of course, but he really appears to be the beneficiary of a very low BABIP, created, I suppose, by the fact that the White Sox have the best defensive efficiency in baseball, a bit ahead of Oakland.

Sunday is a lefty matchup of Mark Buehrle against Barry Zito and that's a matchup I don't like as an A's fan. I think the A's ought to win the first two games of the series if they want to take two of three, but I can't predict that'll happen. My guess? Oakland wins the first game behind a decent offensive showing and a dominant pitching outing by Harden, lose game two when Kirk Saarloos gets "blowed up," and lose game three when they get shut down by Buehrle.

Posted by jason in Baseball, Oakland A's at 15:23