

Yankees open series with rout of Oakland

By Mike Fitzpatrick
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — Robinson Cano, Mark Teixeira and the New York Yankees tagged Trevor Cahill for the second time this season, emphatically ending the All-Star's run of pitching excellence in an 11-0 rout of the Oakland Athletics on Monday night.

Marcus Thames hit a three-run shot to extend his home run streak and New York (81-50) got back-to-back long balls from Teixeira and Cano to move a season-best 31 games over .500. Nick Swisher added three hits and three RBIs, including a two-run double in the first inning that helped the Yankees erase a 3-0 deficit.

Still, they couldn't shake Tampa Bay atop the AL East. The Yankees and Rays, who beat

Toronto 6-2, remained tied for first place for the eighth straight day.

The Yankees said that's the longest stretch that two major league teams have been tied for first this late in a regular season, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Demoted starter Javier Vazquez (10-9) replaced Dustin Moseley in the fifth and earned his second win in three relief outings this year.

Aided by Shortstop Derek Jeter's fine play in the field, Vazquez allowed one run and two hits while striking out six in the final 4 2-3 innings.

Jeff Larish homered and drove in four runs for the A's, who fell to 4-18 against the Yankees over the past three years — including 1-6 this season.

Oakland began the day with the

league's best ERA at 3.48, but that was before facing off against New York's high-powered offensive lineup.

The Yankees scored 11 times in the first five innings to chase Cahill (14-6) after he entered 5-1 with a 0.77 ERA in six starts since July 28.

The sinkerballer gave up eight earned runs and nine hits, both season highs, in four-plus innings of work — his shortest outing of the year.

Cahill was touched up for six runs by New York in six innings of a 6-1 loss at home July 6, when Alex Rodriguez hit a grand slam and a solo homer off the right-hander.

Rodriguez, on the disabled list with a strained left calf, wasn't even a threat Monday night — but the Yankees have hardly missed a beat when he's out, going 16-3

without the three-time MVP this season.

Teixeira returned to the lineup after sitting out Sunday's victory over the Chicago White Sox with a bruised right thumb.

The slugger certainly looked healthy, reaching base safely all four times up with a single, double, homer and walk.

With two outs in the third, the Yankees snapped a 3-all tie when Teixeira and Cano hit consecutive line drives just over the short porch in right.

It was Cano's career-high 26th homer this season, surpassing his total from last year.

No. 9 batter Ramiro Pena added an RBI single with two outs in the fourth, then Jeter turned in a difficult play to preserve a 6-4 lead in the fifth.

With runners at the corners and two outs, he made a backhand

pickup and one-hopped a jump throw to first to get third baseman Kevin Kousser off by a half-step.

New York broke it open as the first five batters reached safely in the bottom half.

Teixeira led off with a double and scored on Cano's single, which chased Cahill. Swisher hit an RBI double off Henry Rodriguez, Jorge Posada was hit by a pitch and Thames drove a three-run shot into the second deck in left, just inside the foul pole.

It was Thames' sixth home run in his last five starts.

Teixeira, Cano and Swisher, New York's 3-4-5 hitters, went 8 for 9 with five extra-base hits and seven RBIs through the first five innings as the Yankees got off to a big start in the opener of a 10-game homestand, their longest this season.

Brackett

From Page 10.

Brackett most of his time catching passes over the middle with seniors Derrick Williams and Deon Butler outside of him. He totaled 13 catches for 160 yards and ended his season with three receptions in the Rose Bowl loss to USC.

Brackett then moved outside in 2009 and endured his worst statistical season to date.

"I think he understands the plays better, he understands the defense better, he's a better fit there," Bob Brackett said. "Being a wideout, some people don't think he has the speed the rest of them have, which is not totally untrue."

"But he's a big guy, he's got good hands, and I think he'll do well [in the slot]."

Brackett's coach at Lawrence

High School in New Jersey, Rob Radice, noted the difficulties of the position, aside from catching passes over the middle with Big Ten linebackers bearing down on a defenseless receiver.

"Probably the most difficult skill to do in football is to go from one point to another point and block a defensive back who's super fast, and I think that's a skill Brett has to work at to get better," Radice said. "Certainly I imagine it'd be challenging to do with the speed of some of those guys, but he tells me he's really working hard."

Radice said he wasn't worried, pointing to Brackett's versatility and athleticism as the main reasons he'll readjust to the challenges of the H-Back role. Brackett played quarterback in high school, and made the switch to receiver during his freshman season at Penn State, so he's changed his skillsets before.

"He has an attitude," Radice said. "He has great hands, he has good speed for a big man. He has good knowledge of the game, but his work ethic sets him apart from others. He really is a hustler and really has a great work ethic and a great attitude."

Both Radice and Bob Brackett noted that attitude as a key element to Brackett's game.

Radice said it is a trait Brackett has had since he started playing football, and a trait that has helped him emerge as one of the leaders on a very deep wide receiver unit.

"What made him as a young athlete is that he always out-worked everyone else," Radice said.

"He was always the first guy to finish the sprints. He was very determined to always set the bar."

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Spikes

From Page 10.

pick of the St. Louis Cardinals in June, threw six innings in the outing, allowing just one run on four hits.

Brown, who went 1-for-3 with a double and scored one of the two State College runs, said Gast threw a firm fastball from the left side, which is a pitch the Spikes have had very little experience hitting against this season.

"He pounded the zone well," Brown said of Gast.

"I thought we hit the ball hard a couple of times but never really cashed in on those key situations."

The first of the Spikes' runs came from right fielder Cole White, who got his team on the board with a solo home run to center field off Gast in the sixth inning.

White said he was looking fast-ball the entire way on the 2-1 ball he hit out of the yard for his third long ball this season.

The second State College run came in the ninth inning on an RBI single by designated hitter Gerlis Rodriguez.

Spikes left fielder Adalberto Santos, who was named the New York-Penn League's Offensive Player of the Week on Sunday, added a single and a double Monday night to improve his batting average to .321, but the Spikes' combined six hits were not enough to snap the losing streak.

"We keep battling every single night and baseball's just like this — you're going to have your ups and downs," White said.

"It's all about learning right now and just continuing to fight out there every single night."

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Carpenter

From Page 10.

light edge — for now — over freshman Mikinzie Moydell in the race to replace the graduated Alisha Glass as the team's starting setter.

Carpenter played so well she even received a compliment from the team's biggest critic — coach Russ Rose.

"At the end of the tournament, Coach looked at me and said he likes the way I work hard and likes the way I play," Carpenter said. "He doesn't give compliments too often, so you take it once you get one."

The comment was especially sweet for Carpenter, who wasn't even recruited as a setter.

The bubbly 5-foot-6 Mechanicsville, Va., native, who is rarely seen without a Penn State as a defensive specialist.

But Kabbes said Carpenter is incredibly athletic, she can play anywhere on the court.

It's true. Since her volleyball career began at age 8, when she would tag along with older sister, Rose, to varsity high school practices, Carpenter has played every single position on the court. "Even middle hitter," Curtis Carpenter said. "When she was 12 playing on a 14's team, her coach once was mad at the middles, so he put Kristin on. That definitely took people by surprise."

Carpenter has been impressing people ever since.

Wendy Wadsworth, who coached Carpenter four years at Hanover High School, said Carpenter would've started as an eighth grader if the school would've allowed it.

"Her athleticism is really remarkable," Wadsworth said.

"She probably would've been our best middle, our best libero, our best right side hitter. Heck, the football coach would've wanted her on the football team."

The Hawks retired Carpenter's No. 5 jersey — before she even graduated.

Now, she's looking to make the same kind of impact for Penn State, the three-time defending national champions.

And Wadsworth has no doubt Carpenter will.

"She has a love of the game and a willingness to do anything," Wadsworth said. "She kind of just wanted to prove to people you don't have to be 6-foot-whatever to be a great volleyball player."

At practice, Rose will often ask Carpenter, "Where do you want to play?"

And, according to Curtis Carpenter, her answer is always the same.

"Wherever you need me. Coach."

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Nairn

From Page 10.

because there are a ton of other people who are running past me on my team and we just push each other through. Sometimes it's rough and sometimes you feel like giving up, but that's not the Penn State mentality."

Nairn hasn't scored yet this year, but not from a lack of trying. The sophomore launched a world-class effort from 40 yards out against West Virginia, which was barely saved and another crossbar from about 25 yards hit off the crossbar Sunday.

With seven seniors last year, Nairn wasn't the field to be a substantial leader on the field, but the sophomore grew into that role this offseason. After Sunday's loss to William & Mary, the midfielder sat on the field

after the final horn with a look of disappointment on her face after spending the last five minutes doing everything she could to get the tying goal.

"She's become a better leader and she's organizing for us," Lions coach Erica Walsh said. "The team is starting to turn to her in that role so she's become a big piece, talent wise and leadership wise."

However, the start to the season hasn't been perfect for Nairn. Friday against Virginia, she had a penalty kick saved late in the first half and looked frustrated on the field before halftime. The sophomore latched up a yellow card a few minutes later for kicking a ball away from the official in frustration and said it took about 10 minutes until halftime for her to clear her head.

Though she isn't as involved in the offense as she was last year, Nairn is

"She's become a better leader and she's organizing for us."

Erica Walsh

Penn State women's soccer coach

still the team's primary corner kick taker and her service has led to one goal and numerous other chances. Despite her new role, Nairn isn't worried about a drop off in production.

"We have great targets like Hayley [Brock] and Maya [Hayes] and [Dani Toney] and they seem to be getting the work done and getting us some goals," Nairn said. "So I don't think that I'm really missed and they're doing great, so just keep it up."

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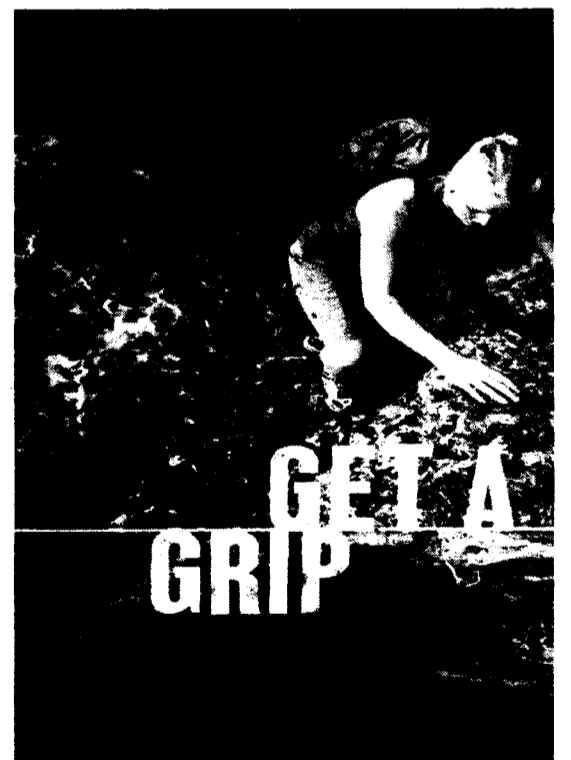


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