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# A's hoping to face Toronto in playoffs

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The Oakland Athletics would rather play the Toronto Blue Jays in the American League playoffs.

"We've got a lot of work, a lot of things we need to accomplish before it's all said and done, and we're going to get right to it," said Dave Stewart, who won his career-high 22nd game in shutting out Kansas City 5-0 in the clincher Tuesday.

"If I had my choice, it would be Toronto," said Rickey Henderson, who had three hits and scored two runs as Oakland won its third consecutive AL West title. "They have that indoor ballpark. Back east, it's going to be cold. I'd rather play in that indoor ballpark."

Echoes Jose Canseco: "Toronto. I'd rather play against Toronto in Toronto because I like their stadium and I like playing against them."

The A's will play out a string of eight games before starting the playoffs against the East Division winner. The Blue Jays held a 1½-game lead over the Boston Red Sox going into Wednesday night's games.

Henderson will likely rest his aching thumb for much of the eight games. Canseco is suffering from a sore back, but he said he will likely play Thursday after missing six straight games.

But the same spirit that made the Athletics the first team to win a division three straight times since the Kansas City Royals, Philadelphia Phillies and New York Yankees did it from 1976-78 is likely to carry over

into the playoffs.

"My highs have been high, but I just feel blessed to be on this team," said Stewart, who pitched a no-hitter in June and has won some important games for the A's. "We don't want to be at the bottom end of the totem pole when all is said and done. We want to be on top."

"You hate to see this, especially with the expectations we had," Royals Manager John Wathan said. "But it was inevitable the way they played."

"It's human nature to have a let-down after you win a world's championship, but they certainly have not showed any signs of a let-down. It's tough to keep repeating the way baseball is. It just shows how strong a club they are."

Stewart had a two-hitter and retired 13 of 14 batters before George Brett singled with two out in the sixth.

The Athletics opened the game with three straight singles off Kevin Appier (11-8) and scored runs in the first two innings.

It all added up to a sweet night for A's manager Tony LaRussa, who accepted a congratulatory hug from Royals pitcher Storm Davis in the Oakland clubhouse.

"Excuse me, I've got to see a friend," LaRussa said before greeting Davis, who pitched for Oakland before signing with the Royals as a free agent.

"Every time, it gets better," LaRussa said.

# Syracuse backup QB takes to field for final minutes

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP) — For the first time since the 1989 Peach Bowl, Syracuse quarterback Mark McDonald got into a football game other than to hold for the kicker.

McDonald, a junior from Klein, Texas, played the final minutes of Syracuse's 20-20 tie with Pittsburgh on Saturday, replacing injured starter Marvin Graves.

Several times last season, McDonald came off the bench in relief of Bill Scharr and rallied the Orangemen in the waning moments, including Syracuse's 19-18 victory over Georgia in the Peach Bowl.

But he couldn't move the Orangemen on Saturday against the Panthers. He started Syracuse's final series with a 10-yard completion to fullback Duane Kinnon. But McDonald was dropped for a 2-yard loss on the next play and followed with two incompletions, which killed the drive.

McDonald said that, although he was used to it, it still was tough going into the game under those circumstances Saturday.

In most cases last season he came on in relief for more than just one series.

"That's the way football is. You've got to be ready for one play or one series or the whole game," McDonald said. "I got a little taste of the season, and that just helps me getting in there for a series like that, when it means something, and next time, hopefully, it will be different."

McDonald didn't envision being a backup this season. After all, he played in 11 games last year and started against Boston College and Louisville.

This was supposed to be his year until Graves, a redshirt freshman, played well enough in the spring and summer to take the starting job.

McDonald said he felt he was

neck-and-neck with Graves until suffering a bruise to his left thigh two weeks before the season opener against Southern California cost him practice time.

McDonald could not practice at full speed and didn't endure any more contact before the Southern Cal game.

Still, Syracuse Coach Dick MacPherson did not name Graves as his starting quarterback until the day before the game.

"I don't think it helped my chances, that's the way I look at that," McDonald said of the injury. "It just delayed my time being out there, getting confidence and getting with the team. That definitely was a negative part."

McDonald has accepted his role as Graves' backup.

His attitude toward playing is the same as it was last year — being mentally and physically prepared when his time comes.

"My role is be ready when he (Graves) gets in trouble or he gets injured and for me to step in and keep the pace up," he said.

Yet, McDonald said it's tough to practice hard every day not knowing what's going to happen during games. He said it's something he's going to have to deal with.

"I think anybody who's competitive wants the job, they want to be number one and you say, 'That could be me out there doing that.' It's tough," he said. "When I say deal with it, I mean you've got to make the best of it and you can't get your head down. You have to stay focused and be positive."

"Marvelous" Marvin, who has been sensational running the option and passing, will only be a sophomore next year and McDonald will be a senior. Barring an injury to Graves, McDonald will be in the same situation. But he said that's too far down the line to discuss.

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**Wudel** Continued from page 9

relief, trying to find one with the right leadership qualities.

Joining the Aikman-Walsh combination, we have Mike Tomczak fighting to get his job back from Jim Harbaugh. Neither one of the QB's has shown the potential to be a Mike Ditka style-player despite winning games.

Last Sunday Cowboy fans watched the loyal Redskin fans hiss at Mark Rypien when he missed his targeted receiver. It was hard to tell if the crowd was cheering when Rypien hobbled off the field with an injury or if they were showing their sympathy. Nevertheless they were glad to see young Stan Humphries run on to the field.

Many other teams are embroiled with similar controversies. Green Bay looks to have finally given the starting job back to Don Majkowski after Anthony Dilweg started the season off with a win over the Bears.

In San Diego the future of the team was to have been with Billy Joe Toller. But veteran Mark Vlasic returned from knee surgery to get the nod in the first game. Vlasic's success soon turned sour and Toller has his job back.

Jeff Chandler, former starter for the Indianapolis Colts before an injury and the drafting of Jeff

George, moved to Tampa Bay. If Testaverde remains inconsistent, which is very possible, Chandler is a very able quarterback to fill the position after showing sparks of potential with the Colts.

Then there are the teams with out a leader to speak of. The New England Patriots aren't bragging about Marc Wilson, Steve Grogan, and rookie Tommy Hodson. Neither are the New York Jets, with Ken O'Brien, Pat Ryan, and Tony Eason.

And there is New Orleans and John Fourcade, a guy who played Arena football before jumping on with the Saints and now finds himself the leader.

Texas A&M is lucky to have two quarterbacks in Lance Pavlas and Bucky Richardson. Both have different styles but are very capable of stepping in when needed to lead the team. The best part about this situation is both guys are not whining, but pulling for each other.

So after all the Montanas, Elways, and Marinors are the rest of the quarterbacks. Each is looking for a chance to shine. Some will try but fail. Still others will never even get the chance to try, but wear a pair of headphones and signal in plays from the sideline for a year.