Today's Clips Contents

FROM THE LA TIMES (Page 3)

- Angels fall to Cubs, 5-1, for fifth loss in a row
- Tim Lincecum clears waivers, accepts assignment in minors

FROM THE OC REGISTER (Page 6)

- John Lackey pitches Cubs past Angels, gives Jered Weaver reason to hope
- Tim Lincecum accepts Angels minor league assignment, will resort to Triple-A Salt Lake
- Angels Notes: The bullpen shuffle continues with Cam Bedrosian going to DL
- On deck: Angels at Cubs, Wednesday, 5 p.m.

FROM ANGELS.COM (Page 10)

- Homers hurt Weaver as Angels fall at Wrigley
- Weaver takes inspiration from Lackey’s path
- Lincecum accepts Triple-A move; Bedrosian to DL
- Veteran catcher Soto set to return to Angels
- Nolasco, Hammel to close two-game set at Wrigley

FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS (Page 16)

- Bryant, Lackey lead Cubs over Angels 5-1 for 8th straight
- Angels’ Lincecum accepts demotion to Triple-A

FROM FOX SPORTS (Page 19)

- Angels-Cubs Preview
FROM THE LA TIMES

Angels fall to Cubs, 5-1, for fifth loss in a row

Pedro Moura

The trade deadline behind them, the roster largely here to stay, the rest of the 2016 Angels season is an exercise in futility. Beyond the search for reasons to believe in the future of the franchise, it is competition merely for the sake of it.

The plight is perhaps best depicted by Jered Weaver, the 33-year-old right-hander who for many years exceeded industry-wide expectations because of his thirst for conquest and now confronts the daily reality of a body worn down by years of pitching.

He started Tuesday for the Angels against the Chicago Cubs and John Lackey, a longtime friend four years his senior. The Cubs won, 5-1, at Wrigley Field. Losers of five consecutive contests, the Angels have again descended into last place in the American League West. With 49 victories in 112 tries, they trail division-leading Texas by 17 games.

Weaver and Lackey exchanged encouraging texts Monday, the day before they matched up for the third time. They split the prior decisions.

“I really respect the way he’s still competing and still getting after it with stuff that’s a little less than he used to have,” Lackey said. “He’s still grinding, still trying to help his club win. It’s still a little weird, because I root for him when he’s not facing us.”

Weaver and Lackey have been close since Weaver debuted as an Angel in 2006. When Weaver became the Angels’ opening-day starter two years later, he took it over from Lackey, a torch-passing he referenced in March, when it became clear Garrett Richards would be the Angels’ opening-day starter.

Kole Calhoun hit Lackey’s third pitch Tuesday into the overhang above the ivy in left-center field. The Angels would amass only two more hits, singles from Ji-Man Choi in the fifth inning and Calhoun in the sixth. They never had a man in scoring position, as Lackey deployed a mix of steady heat, cutters and curveballs.

Weaver experienced little trouble before catcher Willson Contreras led off the third with a score-tying home run. Lackey followed with a drive to right field that excited the crammed crowd but did not depart the ballpark.

When Anthony Rizzo led off the fourth inning with a double, the Angels threw back to first base to check, thinking he had missed it. He had not. Ben Zobrist then hit a go-ahead double down the right-field line. Jorge Soler hit the next pitch into left field for a single, putting runners on the corners without an out. Addison Russell’s sacrifice fly drove in Zobrist.
After Weaver retired Lackey to lead off the fifth, the inning devolved into a mess of poor plays and poor decisions. Dexter Fowler popped a foul just past the Cubs dugout and Yunel Escobar jogged after it. As he reached out to grab the baseball, a spectator reached both his hands above Escobar’s glove. Interference was not called. Manager Mike Scioscia protested. After the four umpires conferred, an out was called.

Kris Bryant hit the next pitch for a home run. After a double and walk, the Cubs scored when Weaver took his eyes off Albert Pujols’ flip to first base on a dribbler. His day was done after the inning: five innings, five runs.

“I felt all right,” Weaver said. “It’s one of those lineups where you can’t really breathe while you’re out there. There’s no leeway. I grinded, tried to make some outs, and some things didn’t go my way there towards the end.”

At one point this spring, Weaver intimated he would rather retire than again pitch as unsuccessfully as he did in 2015. His earned-run average now is more than half a point higher, but he does not sound like a man ready to depart for good in seven weeks. He has more command of his pitches now, he said, and that makes the endeavor more enjoyable.

He noted the message he received from Lackey, admiration that he is still competing, unfazed by the decreased velocity.

“That’s pretty much all I got right now,” Weaver said. “Until I can go out and get healthy again.”

Tim Lincecum clears waivers, accepts assignment in minors

Pedro Moura

Tim Lincecum accepted his assignment to triple-A Salt Lake after clearing waivers and will report.

The Angels designated Lincecum for assignment Saturday. Any claiming team would have had to pick up more than $800,000 remaining on the 32-year-old right-hander’s contract for the season’s final two months.

In nine starts with the Angels, Lincecum had a 9.16 earned-run average, second-worst among pitchers who have thrown as many innings this season. His fastball averaged 87.7 mph, about the same as one year ago.

The former Cy Young Award while with the San Francisco Giants winner was conflicted between trying to establish the faded fastball to set up his off-speed offerings, as he always had, and avoiding the pitch that hitters were hitting hard. After his last start, he said he resolved to throw more fastballs. He was designated the next day.
“This is not a trial-and-error theater here,” Manager Mike Scioscia said Tuesday. “You have to be able to do it.”

Lincecum attracted significant interest after a showcase in Arizona in May. But most of the teams, including the Giants, sought him as a reliever. He wanted to start, so he signed with the Angels.

He’ll be a starter at Salt Lake, where the Angels are short on starting depth. The Angels left open the possibility he could earn another chance to start in the majors, perhaps in September.

Jhoulys Chacin will start Thursday in Cleveland, filling the vacated spot in the rotation and allowing Tyler Skaggs and Matt Shoemaker an additional day of rest.

**Bedrosian is put on the disabled list**

Tendinitis on the right middle finger forced reliever Cam Bedrosian to the 15-day disabled list.

The Angels recalled fellow right-hander A.J. Achter from Salt Lak.

Bedrosian, 24, had ascended into the unofficial closing role with Joe Smith traded and Huston Street on the disabled list. He struck out the side for his first save and had not given up a run in two months until Aug. 3, when he blew a save opportunity.

The tendinitis was not a factor, Scioscia said, even though it had bothered Bedrosian for at least a week.

**Short hops**

The Angels claimed left-hander Brett Oberholtzer off waivers from Philadelphia and will add him to the 25-man roster this week. Oberholtzer, 27, has a 4.09 ERA over 304 innings, split between starting and relieving. He’ll pitch out of the bullpen as an Angel. … The Angels activated catcher Geovany Soto from the 15-day disabled list after Tuesday’s game and optioned Carlos Perez to triple-A Salt Lake. Soto will start Wednesday, Scioscia said. … Right-hander Nick Tropeano’s elbow ligament-replacement surgery has been scheduled for Aug. 16.
FROM OC REGISTER

John Lackey pitches Cubs past Angels, gives Jered Weaver reason to hope

By JEFF FLETCHER / STAFF WRITER

CHICAGO – If Jered Weaver ever needs inspiration to keep working to revive his career, he needs only to look at his old friend, John Lackey.

And he got a close look on Tuesday night, as Lackey – four years Weaver’s senior, but pitching with a 5-year-old elbow – outpitched Weaver in the Angels’ 5-1 loss to the Chicago Cubs.

Weaver, who is still fighting flexibility issues more than any type of injury that can be fixed in surgery, said he’s not surprised at how well Lackey has rebounded.

Weaver said Lackey was “grinding through” his elbow issues the last few years with the Angels.

“Once he got that thing healthy, he was going to keep doing what he was doing,” Weaver said. “He’s feeling good. And he’s had a tremendous career after that.”

After Lackey gave up one run in eight innings on Tuesday, his ERA stands at 3.56. He has a 3.39 ERA since having surgery after the 2011 season.

“You look at his numbers since he had the elbow surgery a couple years ago, and he’s come back and he’s throwing the ball better than he ever was,” said Manager Mike Scioscia, who had Lackey for his entire Angels career, from 2002-09.

While Scioscia and Weaver are admiring Lackey from afar, Lackey looks at his old friend and hopes he can turn it around too.

“It’s still a little weird because I root for him when he’s not facing us,” Lackey said. “He’s a good friend. I really respect the way he’s still competing and still getting after it with stuff that’s a little less than he used to have. But he’s still grinding, still trying to help his club win.”

Weaver’s loss of velocity has been well-chronicled. He insists that he can get it back once he works through his physical issues.

He’s now throwing 84-86 mph, mostly, with still enough deception and good enough off-speed stuff that he can pitch effectively at times. His ERA still stands at 5.19, though, far above his standard.

“It’s getting better,” Weaver said of his physical condition. “Each and every time it feels better. It feels different. ... My body is feeling a lot less restriction. I had been working against myself. Now I’m getting stronger and gaining flexibility back. One day it’s all going to click.”
Weaver started with two scoreless innings, and had only allowed a solo homer to Willson Contreras through three innings.

But the Cubs then scored two in the fourth and another in the fifth on a homer by Kris Bryant. Ji-Man Choi then misplayed a popup into a double, which led to another run.

When his night was over, he had allowed five runs – four earned – in five innings against the team with the best record in baseball.

“I felt all right,” Weaver said. “It’s not an easy lineup. It’s one of those lineups you can’t really breathe while you’re out there. There’s no leeway. I grinded. Some things didn’t go my way there toward the end. It was just a grind.”

Tim Lincecum accepts Angels minor league assignment, will resort to Triple-A Salt Lake

By JEFF FLETCHER / STAFF WRITER

CHICAGO -- Undeterred when the Angels ended one phase of his comeback attempt, Tim Lincecum is going to continue trying to find himself at Triple-A.

Lincecum, who by virtue of his service time had the option of accepting a minor league assignment or becoming a free agent, agreed on Tuesday to go to Salt Lake City. He is expected to report to Triple-A Salt Lake City on Friday and join the rotation there.

Lincecum, 32, was designated for assignment Saturday, a day after he allowed six runs to the Seattle Mariners. Lincecum had a 9.16 ERA in 38 1/3 innings with the Angels. Opponents hit .395 with an 1.136 OPS against him.

Manager Mike Scioscia said Lincecum understood when the Angels made the move that he needed to be in Triple-A to solve the issues with his delivery.

"I think he understands the challenge in front of him, what he needs to do," Scioscia said. "The best way to do it is to really go out and practice. It's impossible to practice these things in a major league environment. This is not trial and error theater here."

Lincecum signed an incentive-laden, $2.5 million deal with the Angels in May, after holding a showcase attended by most major league teams.

Since 2012, Lincecum has failed to pitch anywhere close to the level that won him two Cy Young awards in the first half of his career, 2007-11, with the San Francisco Giants. He had a hip problem that caused him to alter his mechanics, eventually resulting in surgery last year.
Lincecum said he’s still trying to refine his mechanics, which is why his command and control were lacking for much of his time with the Angels. He also has lost some velocity, his fastball consistently around 87-89 mph.

"He has enough velocity," Scioscia said. "He’s not going from 96 to 83. He is still touching 90, which is plenty. But he’s more command-sensitive now than he was five years ago. That’s something he has to wrap his arms around and tame."

**Angels Notes: The bullpen shuffle continues with Cam Bedrosian going to DL**

By JEFF FLETCHER / STAFF WRITER

CHICAGO – The Angels bullpen on Tuesday was as far from the offseason blueprint as it had been all year, and it’s going to get even less recognizable in the next few days.

The Angels placed Cam Bedrosian on the disabled list with tendinitis in his finger, bringing up A.J. Achter to replace him.

It left the Angels with an eight-man bullpen that included four pitchers who had been designated for assignment this year: Deolis Guerra, J.C. Ramirez, Jose Valdez and Achter.

The bullpen is going to add another cast-off when Brett Oberholtzer joins the team, perhaps as soon as Thursday. The Angels claimed the left-handed reliever on waivers from the Philadelphia Phillies, who had designated him for assignment.

Two others – Mike Morin and Jose Alvarez -- had been demoted to the minors within the past month. Jhoulys Chacin is a deposed starter who is going back to the rotation on Thursday, in Tim Lincecum’s place.

The only pitcher who has held a stable job all year is Fernando Salas.

With closer Huston Street and Bedrosian both on the disabled list, the Angels will truly have a committee approach to the ninth inning.

Scioscia said he’s not sure how long Bedrosian will be out. He won’t throw at all for at least a week.

“He felt it for about a week but it was something he could pitch with,” Scioscia said. “It flared up the other day.”

Scioscia added that he didn’t think the finger injury was why Bedrosian had such a rough outing last Wednesday, when he didn’t retire any of the five batters he faced.
As for Oberholtzer, he had started throughout his three years in the majors with the Houston Astros, but the Phillies used him in relief this season. Oberholtzer, 27, had a 4.83 ERA with the Phillies.

Although he's not stretched out to start now, the Angels will certainly have him as an option to start him next year. Oberholtzer is still under control for four more seasons. The Angels are looking for all the starters they can find, with Andrew Heaney and Nick Tropeano out and Jered Weaver and C.J. Wilson unsigned.

ALSO

Geovany Soto was activated after Tuesday's game. Soto has been out since July 18 because of a sore right knee. The Angels optioned Carlos Perez to Triple-A Salt Lake and kept Jett Bandy on the major-league roster...

Tropeano's Tommy John surgery has been scheduled for Aug. 16 in Los Angeles. Tropeano will be out until 2018...

C.J. Cron will begin taking live batting practice this week in Arizona. Cron is about a month removed from breaking his left hand. He could begin a rehab assignment by the end of this week and return to the Angels within a week after that...

Yunel Escobar returned to the Angels lineup on Tuesday after missing Sunday's game with a sore left knee.

On deck: Angels at Cubs, Wednesday, 5 p.m.

By JEFF FLETCHER / STAFF WRITER

Where: Wrigley Field
TV: Fox Sports West
Did you know? Ricky Nolasco was originally drafted by the Cubs in 2001. They traded him to the Marlins before he reached the majors.

THE PITCHERS

ANGELS RHP RICKY NOLASCO (4-8, 5.23)
Vs. Cubs: 7-2, 2.81
At Wrigley Field: 3-2, 3.00
Hates to face: Jason Heyward, 8 for 23 (.348)
Loves to face: None

CUBS RHP JASON HAMMEL (11-5, 3.07)
Vs. Angels: 1-3, 6.59
At Wrigley Field: 13-5, 3.06
Hates to face: Mike Trout, 4 for 13 (.308)
Loves to face: Yunel Escobar, 5 for 26 (.192)

FROM ANGELS.COM

Homers hurt Weaver as Angels fall at Wrigley

By Carrie Muskat and Brian Hedger / MLB.com

CHICAGO -- John Lackey and Jered Weaver were former teammates on the Angels, and had met twice before, splitting those games. Lackey now has the edge and the Cubs have an eight-game winning streak, thanks to a high-powered offensive attack.

Kris Bryant belted his 28th home run, a 414-foot shot that landed on Waveland Avenue, and Willson Contreras added a solo shot in the Cubs' 5-1 Interleague victory Tuesday night over the Angels in front of 41,227 at Wrigley Field that sent Chicago to its 70th win, the quickest the Cubs have reached 70 wins since 1945, which was their last World Series appearance. The eight straight wins for the 70-41 Cubs matches their season high, also done May 2-10.

"Our confidence is high right now," said Chicago's Ben Zobrist, who added an RBI double in the fourth. "You have to try to keep it going as long as you can. We still have a lot of games to play yet, so we're not watching the scoreboard or anything like that. We're trying to come in and play good baseball. We've been doing a good job of that since the All-Star break, and we're going to try to continue that."

Lackey served up Kole Calhoun's 11th homer on the third pitch of the game, and gave up two more hits over eight innings for the win. Lackey admitted it was weird facing his former teammate.

"I root for him when he's not facing us," Lackey said of Weaver. "He's a good friend and I respect the way he's still competing and still getting after it with stuff that's less than it used to be. He's still grinding and still getting it done."

Weaver lasted just five innings, allowed all five Cubs runs (four earned), and committed an error that led to a run in the fifth.

"It's not an easy lineup to face," Weaver said. "They've got one of those lineups where you can't really breathe while you're out there. There's no leeway. So, I grinded and tried to make some outs, and some things didn't go my way there toward the end. It was just a grind."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

In and out: With one out in the Chicago fifth, Dexter Fowler hit a popup near the seats along the third-base line. The Angels' Yunel Escobar tried to catch it, but two fans also reached for the
ball. Angels manager Mike Scioscia argued with third-base umpire Stu Scheurwater that the fans interfered, and after the umps conferred, Fowler was called out.

"At first they said the fan never even [touched it], Escobar just dropped it," Scioscia said. "I think the official call on the field is sometimes important, before you go to replay, so once they did acknowledge fan interference, they weren't going to overturn it, because it was fan interference."

Bryant then crushed the first pitch from Weaver over the left-field bleachers and onto the street. According to Statcast™, the exit velocity was 106 mph.

 Loving the road: Calhoun's 2-for-4 performance was a continuation of a season-long trend. Calhoun is hitting .327 on the road, as compared to just .222 at Angel Stadium. Calhoun's home run was his 68th run scored and he came into the game ranked third in among American League right fielders in that category.

"Kole's been hitting the ball hard everywhere," Scioscia said. "I don't know if there's a guy that's had quite the exit velocities he's had in the last month with so little to show for it. He's swinging the bat much better than his average shows, and it was good to see him drive the ball tonight."

 Getting in gear: The Cubs tied the score at 1 on Contreras' leadoff homer in the third, then rattled off three straight hits in the fourth, including back-to-back doubles by Anthony Rizzo and Zobrist to go ahead, 2-1. Zobrist eventually scored on Addison Russell's sacrifice fly. Russell now has 16 RBIs since the All-Star break, second on the team to Rizzo, who has 17.

 Home run woes: Weaver, who hasn't won since July 17, served up two home runs for the second time in his past three starts. Weaver contributed to the second run of the fifth inning by dropping a throw from Albert Pujols at first for what could've been the third out, allowing Rizzo to score from second on the error.

"I don't think he pitched as poorly as his line is going to go down," Scioscia said. "We let some things get away from us a little bit, but just a couple mistakes he made, those guys hit them out."

INJURY UPDATE
Cubs reliever Hector Rondon was not available Tuesday because of a sore right triceps. Manager Joe Maddon said the injury wasn't serious, and that they would know more about Rondon's status on Wednesday.

REPLAY REVIEW
Ji-Man Choi hit a ground ball up the middle with one out in the Angels' fifth that Russell stopped with a diving effort in shallow center field. Russell's throw to first was initially ruled to have beaten Choi to first, but the Angels challenged it. After a review, Choi was ruled safe.
WHAT’S NEXT
Angels: Right-hander Ricky Nolasco will make his second start with the Angels, who acquired him Aug. 1 in a trade with the Twins. Nolasco’s debut with the Angels was against the A’s, and he allowed five earned runs in six innings for a no-decision. Nolasco is 7-2 with a 2.81 ERA in 11 career games (10 starts) against the Cubs. First pitch is scheduled for 5:05 p.m. PT.

Cubs: Jason Hammel will start Wednesday and close this brief Interleague set. Hammel is 6-1 with a 2.24 ERA at Wrigley Field. He was activated from the bereavement list on Tuesday, and was pushed back one day. First pitch will be 7:05 p.m. CT.

Weaver takes inspiration from Lackey’s path

By Brian Hedger / MLB.com

CHICAGO -- They didn't exchange any playful banter, but Jered Weaver and John Lackey did trade smiles as Weaver headed to the batter's box for the first time Tuesday night at Wrigley Field.

The at-bat, which started the third inning in the Angels' 5-1 loss to start a two-game Interleague set, ended with Weaver striking out looking. It was one of Lackey's six strikeouts in eight innings to earn the win, but it was also by a pitcher who has served as a motivation for Weaver to continue battling through physical issues that have plagued him the past couple years.

Lackey, who became friends with Weaver while spending four seasons atop the Angels' rotation with him (2006-09), has regained his effectiveness after Tommy John surgery in 2011, despite being 37 years old.

"He's a hard worker and I knew once he got that [elbow] healthy, he was going to keep doing what he was doing [before]," said Weaver, who went five innings and allowed five runs (four earned). "Obviously, he's feeling good and has had a tremendous career, even after that."

It's something Weaver can look at in his own health struggle, which included back problems last season and a deteriorating vertebrae issue in his neck that was diagnosed this past spring. The Angels have said there's no surgery that can fix the vertebrae issue, but Weaver said he's starting to feel healthier and is getting his command back with each start.

"It's getting better," he said. "Each and every time it gets better. Each and every time I go out, it feels different, but definitely my body is feeling a lot less restrictions going out there. So, I've kind of been working against myself with getting stronger and getting flexibility back, but one day it's all going to click."

Earlier this season, Weaver got a text message from Lackey that was basically a pep talk of sorts.
"It's hard to talk to people, and it's one of those things where not everybody has felt what I've been kind of going through," Weaver said. "He sent me a text and said that he loves how I still go out there to compete, and that's pretty much all I've got right now, until I can get healthy again. Like I've been [saying], I'm not going to go out there and hang my head. I'm going to go out there and keep battling and keep grinding, and try to keep us in games."

Weaver's fastball velocity has taken a big drop the past two seasons and he's sometimes paid the price for it with some rough lines in box scores. Look no further than his outing Tuesday, when rookie catcher Willson Contreras tagged a fastball for a long solo homer in the third and Kris Bryant blasted a breaking ball onto Waveland Avenue for a solo shot in the fifth. Weaver committed an error later in the fifth, dropping the potential third out on a close play at first base that allowed Anthony Rizzo to make it 5-1 by scoring from second base.

"I don't think he pitched as poorly as his line is going to go down," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said of Weaver. "We let some things get away from us a little bit, but just a couple mistakes he made, those guys hit them out. He had good stuff. He just used a lot of pitches to get to that part of the game, it was hot, and those guys hit a couple out."

**Lincecum accepts Triple-A move; Bedrosian to DL**

Angels claim Oberholtzer, call up Achter from Salt Lake

By Cash Kruth and Brian Hedger / MLB.com

CHICAGO -- The Angels made a series of roster moves before Tuesday's game against the Cubs, including veteran right-hander Tim Lincecum accepting his assignment to Triple-A Salt Lake.

Lincecum, who was designated for assignment on Saturday, posted a 9.16 ERA and .395 average against in nine starts for the Angels this season.

"In talking with Tim, I think he understands the challenge in front of him and what he needs to do," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "And the best way to do it is to really go out and practice it. It's impossible to practice the things that he's working on in a Major League environment. We're really happy that Tim is going to go down and pitch. We all feel that there's a Major League pitcher that is hopefully going to blossom out of the pitcher that's making adjustments like Tim [is]."

Lincecum's biggest adjustment will be working effectively with less velocity.

"This guy hasn't gone from 96 to 83 [mph]," Scioscia said. "This guy is still touching 90, which is plenty, and he has deception in his delivery. It's just, I think he's more command-sensitive now than he was five years ago, and that's something that he has to wrap his arms around and tame."
Los Angeles also placed right-hander Cam Bedrosian on the 15-day disabled list with right middle finger flexor tendinitis, retroactive to Thursday, and replaced him with righty A.J. Achter, who has a 3.98 ERA in 12 appearances for the Angels this season.

Bedrosian had converted one of two save opportunities since Angels closer Huston Street was placed on the 15-day disabled list Aug. 2 with inflammation in his right knee. Scioscia said he'll take a closer-by-committee approach until Street or Bedrosian return.

"When [Bedrosian] was pitching, he said it was fine, but it just flared up more than usual with what he was dealing with in-between [appearances]," Scioscia said. "He's taking some medicine and hopefully it'll calm down and we'll evaluate him. I don't think he's going to throw for at least a week. So, it's going to take some time."

Achter has been called up and sent down multiple times this season. He's hoping to keep making a good impression whenever he gets a chance with the Angels.

"I'm happy to be back," Achter said. "This is my fifth time up and down already this year, so it's been an interesting year. But it's been fun. I'm happy to be back, that's for sure."

The Halos also claimed left-hander Brett Oberholtzer off waivers from the Phillies. A 25-man roster move will be made when Oberholtzer reports to the Major League club. Scioscia doesn't know when Oberholtzer will arrive, but said the Angels will use the new hurler out of the bullpen.

**Veteran catcher Soto set to return to Angels**

By Brian Hedger / MLB.com

CHICAGO -- The Angels activated catcher Geovany Soto from the 15-day disabled list after Tuesday night's 5-1 loss to the Cubs at Wrigley Field.

Soto, who was placed on the 15-day disabled list July 18 with left knee inflammation, had been on a Minor League rehab assignment with the Triple-A Salt Lake Bees since Aug. 4, hitting .154 with a home run and three RBIs in four games.

Catcher Carlos Perez was optioned to Salt Lake following Tuesday's game.

"Well, you know, Geovany, he's a veteran presence and he knows his way around a game," said Angels manager Mike Scioscia. "He's great working with pitchers and he still swings the bat well, so we're going to be happy to get him back in our lineup. Hopefully he'll contribute and give us a little bit of a spark. He'll be playing [Wednesday]."
Soto has experienced trouble in both knees this season. The former Cubs catcher also had a DL stint in May for a torn right meniscus, which kept him out from May 18 until July 9.

Soto, who played last season for the White Sox, is hitting .284 with three home runs and right RBIs in 22 games this year for the Angels, who started Jett Bandy behind the plate in the Tuesday's game against the Cubs.

Worth noting

- Right-hander Jhoulys Chacin (3-7, 5.27 ERA) will get the first opportunity to fill the rotation spot vacated by right-hander Tim Lincecum, who was designated for assignment Saturday and assigned to Salt Lake on Tuesday. Chacin, who's been working out of the bullpen after beginning the season as a starter, has made 15 starts among his 23 appearances. Rather than waiting for Lincecum's turn in the rotation to come up Saturday in Cleveland, Chacin will start Thursday to start a series against the Indians at Progressive Field, which will give Tyler Skaggs and Matt Shoemaker and extra day of rest between starts.

- Closer Huston Street, who was placed on the 15-day disabled list Aug. 2 with right knee inflammation, had a cortisone injection in the knee and could soon begin throwing again.

"He's in Arizona and he'll probably start picking up a ball here in a couple days, and hopefully it'll be a quick rebound for him," Scioscia said. "He wasn't down that long. We'll see how his knee feels. He had an injection in there, and we'll see if he'll be ready to go."

- Injured first baseman C.J. Cron is in Arizona at the Angels' complex taking soft-toss batting practice and is scheduled to progress to live batting practice this week. Cron, who's been on the disabled list since July 9, had surgery July 12 to repair a fractured bone in his left hand.

"It's going to take some time," Scioscia said.

- Right-hander Nick Tropeano will undergo Tommy John Surgery on Aug. 16 in Los Angeles. The procedure will be performed by Dr. Neal Elattrache. Tropeano was placed on the 15-day disabled list July 19 and made the decision to undergo the season-ending surgery Aug. 3. Tropeano is expected to miss all of next season, as well.

Nolasco, Hammel to close two-game set at Wrigley

By Brian Hedger / MLB.com

Jason Hammel, who was taken off the bereavement list Tuesday, will start for the Cubs against the Angels on Wednesday night in the finale of a two-game set at Wrigley Field as Chicago tries to extend its winning streak to a season-high nine games.
Hammel, who took care of a family matter during his absence, was only pushed back one day by the absence. The right-hander is coming off six scoreless innings in his last start, Aug. 2 at home against the Marlins.

The Angels will get another chance to see right-hander Ricky Nolasco in action.

Nolasco, who was acquired Aug. 1 in a trade with the Twins, made his Angels debut last Thursday against the A's. He didn't factor into the decision, allowing five earned runs and six hits in six innings. Nolasco has since spent time dissecting the outing with pitching coach Charles Nagy.

"After Ricky's first outing, he had some good talks with [Nagy] and I think he understands some of the things that got away from him his first start," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "Hopefully he'll be able to do them here, so we'll look forward to a good game from Ricky."

Things to know about this game

• Former Cubs catcher Geovany Soto might be activated Wednesday from the 15-day disabled list and rejoin the Angels. Soto has been on the DL since July 18 with left knee inflammation.

• Hammel is 4-0 with 1.50 ERA in four starts since the All Star break, but just 1-3 with a 6.59 ERA in six career appearances (five starts) against the Angels.

• The Angels are using a closer-by-committee approach to closing games after right-hander Cam Bedrosian was placed on the DL Tuesday with right middle finger flexor tendinitis. Bedrosian was filling the role in place of closer Huston Street, who's on the DL with right knee inflammation.

FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bryant, Lackey lead Cubs over Angels 5-1 for 8th straight

CHICAGO -- John Lackey was ornery and fired up, just what the Cubs needed from their veteran right-hander to keep rolling.

Lackey outpitched friend and former teammate Jered Weaver, Kris Bryant hit his 28th home run and Chicago beat the Los Angeles Angels 5-1 Tuesday night for its eighth straight victory.

Willson Contreras also homered and Ben Zobrist added an RBI double for the major league-leading Cubs, who won their 70th game and moved a season-high 29 over .500.
Kole Calhoun homered on Lackey's third pitch, but the former Angels right-hander later retired 12 straight. Lackey (9-7) allowed three hits over eight innings, and all six of his strikeouts were looking.

"He's not going to be out there smiling all the time and he's going to be upset with umpires and he's going to be upset with his manager," said Cubs skipper Joe Maddon, who was with the Angels when Lackey started his career in 2002. "He's going to be upset with teammates on occasion. But that's just who he is, and when you know that, it's OK. Because you love having him on your team."

Weaver (8-9) gave up four earned runs and another one that was unearned when he dropped a throw to first base for an error during the Angels' fifth straight loss.

Bryant homered over the left-field bleachers in the fifth, giving Lackey more than enough cushion. Pedro Strop pitched a perfect ninth to finish the three-hitter.

"I thought he had an exceptional slider tonight and a really good changeup," Maddon said about Lackey.

The matchup of veteran right-handers was as one-sided as their teams' seasons in the opener of Chicago's 10-game homestand.

The 37-year-old Lackey and 33-year-old Weaver were teammates a decade ago with the Angels. They had split their previous two meetings when Lackey pitched for Boston.

This was the first time they batted against each other.

"It's a little strange when he gets in the box, for sure, because we're good buddies," Lackey said.

Calhoun struck first, sending Lackey's 1-0 pitch into the left-field bleachers for his first homer since June 25. Contreras tied it with a shot to left-center in the third.

Weaver had the Cubs off balance early with his 83 mph fastball and 70 mph curve. But Chicago started to pounce the second time through the order, with Anthony Rizzo doubling in a two-run fourth and again in a two-run fifth.

The second hit came after Bryant sent Weaver's slider onto Waveland Avenue.

"It's one of those lineups where you can't really breathe while you're out there. There's no leeway," Weaver said. "I grinded and tried to get some outs and some things didn't go my way towards the end."

Weaver allowed eight hits in five innings.
"It's still a little weird because I root for him when he's not facing us," Lackey said. "He's a good friend. I really respect the way he's still competing and still getting after it with stuff that's a little less than he used to have. But he's still grinding, still trying to help his club win."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Angels: C Geovany Soto (knee) was activated off the 15-day disabled list after the game and is expected to start Wednesday. C Carlos Perez was optioned to Triple-A Salt Lake. New closer Cam Bedrosian was placed on the 15-day DL with tendinitis in his right middle finger. RHP A.J. Achter was called up from Triple-A. 1B C.J. Cron (hand) plans to take live batting practice in Arizona this week. RHP Nick Tropeano will undergo Tommy John surgery next Tuesday in Los Angeles.

Cubs: Relief pitcher Hector Rondon (triceps) was unavailable. "It's not an issue. I feel a little tired," Rondon said. Jorge Soler started in left field for the first time since June 6 following a hamstring injury and three games as the DH last weekend. He went 2 for 4.

CALL REVERSED

The Cubs' Dexter Fowler was ruled out after 3B Yunel Escobar had a foul pop knocked out of his glove by a fan in the fifth. Umpires initially ruled it no play before huddling and changing the call without a replay review.

HEYWARD'S CATCH

Cubs OF Jason Heyward made a headfirst, snow-cone grab of pinch-hitter Johnny Giavotella's fly to shallow right in the eighth.

UP NEXT

The series concludes Wednesday night with Cubs RHP Jason Hammel (11-5, 3.07 ERA) returning from the bereavement list to face right-hander and former Cubs draft pick Ricky Nolasco (4-8, 5.23).

Bryant, Lackey lead Cubs over Angels 5-1 for 8th straight

CHICAGO -- Two-time NL Cy Young Award winner Tim Lincecum has accepted a demotion to the Los Angeles Angels' Triple-A team.

The Angels announced Tuesday that Lincecum plans to report to Salt Lake City this week.
The Angels designated Lincecum for assignment Saturday after he went 2-6 with a 9.16 ERA in nine starts since signing on May 20 following left hip surgery. The 32-year-old right-hander had the right to refuse a minor league assignment after no other team claimed him off waivers.

Lincecum signed a one-year, $2.5 million deal with the Giants after holding a showcase workout in Arizona for most major league teams.

The Angels also placed right-hander Cam Bedrosian on the 15-day disabled list with a tendinitis in his right middle finger. Right-hander A.J. Achter's contract was selected from Salt Lake City.

And Los Angeles claimed left-hander Brett Oberholtzer off waivers from Philadelphia.

FROM FOX SPORTS

Angels-Cubs Preview

CHICAGO -- Where's Tommy?

Chicago Cubs infielder Tommy La Stella was assigned to Triple-A Iowa on July 29, but hasn't reported after 11 days and the Cubs weren't exactly sure of his whereabouts this week.

So Chicago decided to place La Stella on the temporarily inactive list on Tuesday as they await a decision on if or when he will report to the minors and resume his career.

"I've texted him, I talked to him a couple of days ago," Cubs manager Joe Maddon said on Tuesday. "I don't have a lot to report other than he's not here, he's not in Triple-A and he's back home working out.

"He's not angry, he's not upset. He's just at that point now he doesn't know exactly what he wants to do," Maddon said.

La Stella was reportedly unhappy with the transfer to Iowa, but it wasn't necessarily performance-related. A versatile infielder and left-handed batter, La Stella was hitting .295 with two home runs and eight RBIs in 51 games this season.

But Chicago had options left with La Stella and he didn't have to clear waivers unlike players like Matt Szczur and Chris Coghlan, who have also spent time this season in the minors.

And any transfer to Iowa was viewed as temporary. LaStella was likely to be back when rosters expand on Sept. 1 and even sooner if a key injury occurred.

"Hopefully he's going to get back relatively soon," said Maddon. "We'd love to have him back."
LaStella, 27, was optioned to Triple-A as the Cubs activated Coghlan off the 15-day disabled list.

La Stella has made no public comment.

Angels right-hander Tim Lincecum, a Cy Young Award winner while with the San Francisco Giants, had no issues with accepting a demotion to Triple-A Salt Lake City with an eye to regaining his earlier form.

"We're really happy that Tim is going to go down and pitch," Angels manager Mike Scioscia told reporters. "We all feel that there's a major league pitcher that is hopefully going to blossom out of the pitcher that's making adjustments like Tim (is)."

The Angels also shuffled other pitchers around on Tuesday.

They claimed left-hander Brett Overholtzer off waivers from Philadelphia, placed right-hander Cam Bedrosian on the 15-day disabled list (middle finger tendinitis) and selected the contract of right-hander A.J. Achier from Triple-A Salt Lake.

The short Wrigley Field series concludes on Wednesday as the Angels send recently-acquired right-hander Ricky Nolasco (4-8, 5.23 ERA) against Cubs righty Jason Hammel (11-5, 3.07 ERA).

The start will be Nolasco's second with the Angels since arriving in an Aug. 1 trade with the Minnesota Twins. He did not factor in his first start last Thursday, allowing five earned runs on six hits in a six-inning outing.

Jason Heyward is 8-for-23 (.348) with a solo home run against Nolasco, while Miguel Montero has gone 6-for-24 (.250) with a homer and seven RBIs against him. Anthony Rizzo is 3-for-7 with a double, a homer and two RBIs.

As for Hammel, Mike Trout is the only active Angels player who has taken him deep. Trout is 4-for-13 (.308) with a homer and two RBIs against Hammel. Albert Pujols is 3-for-11 (.273) with an RBI and three walks while Yunel Escobar is 5-for-26 (.192) with an RBI and four strikeouts.