

Sweeney starts season with A's

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Ryan Sweeney has recovered well enough from knee surgery to make the Oakland Athletics roster.

Sweeney played only 13 games during the exhibition season, but showed he was healthy by posting a .395 batting average. He played all three outfield spots and was designated hitter.

Sweeney has been a regular outfielder for the A's for the past three seasons, playing mostly right and center field. He batted .286 in 2008, .293 in 2009 and was hitting a team best .294 last season when he was sidelined in July by patellar tendinitis. He had surgery July 30 and was idled for six months, necessitating the careful approach in spring training.

Oakland Manager Bob Geren told mlb.com that he was counting on Sweeney to be able to play all three outfield spots this season. The A's acquired David DeJesus and Josh Willingham in the offseason and both are experienced major league outfielders. Willingham is slated to start in left, Coco Crisp in center and DeJesus in right to start the season.

"He's going to be an outfielder who's going to have to play all three (spots) to utilize him," Geren said of Sweeney, who has a lifetime .286 batting average in 364 major league games.

Sweeney, 26, is a 2002 Cedar Rapids Xavier grad. He was a second-round pick of the Chicago White Sox in the June 2002 free agent draft. He was traded to Oakland before the 2008 season.