

Harrison's hit delivers Kernels in 12th

Written by Mike Condon

Friday, 17 May 2013 22:40 - Last Updated Friday, 17 May 2013 22:43



Another night, another walk-off win for the Cedar Rapids Kernels.

Although it wasn't nearly as dramatic as Byron Buxton's walk-off grand slam to rally the Kernels to a 7-6 win on Thursday over Burlington, Travis Harrison's one-out single in the bottom of the 12th on Friday night produced the same result.

His grounder just inside third base brought home Jorge Polanco from second, giving Cedar Rapids a 4-3 win over Kane County in the opener of a four-game series before 2,151 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

Harrison's walk-off single was a little more conventional than the one he had earlier this season when he belted the ball over the fence for an apparent grand slam, only to have it ruled a single because one of his teammates passed another on the bases.

"No drama with this one," joked Kernels Manager Jake Mauer. "This one just rolled through, no play anywhere. We didn't have to worry about this one."

Harrison wasn't thinking long ball when he stepped in against Kane County lefty Nathan Dorris in the 12th.

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"It was either a sinker or a change-up," Harrison said of the pitch he hit for the game-winner. "I was looking for an off-speed pitch. He threw me a slider on the first pitch so I was waiting for it.

"I hadn't been looking good on off-speed pitches earlier in the day," he continued. "He threw that pitch and I was able to stay through it just enough."

The walk-off win took a little longer than Mauer would have liked. The Kernels had excellent chances in the sixth, eighth and 10th and 11th innings to score, but were unable to get the big hit until Harrison finally came through.

"It was late coming," Mauer said. "It was tough to get that big hit tonight. The boys kept plugging along and credit to (relief pitchers David) Hurlbut and (Manuel) Soliman. They didn't walk anybody and that was huge."

The second of J.D. Williams' RBI triples in the bottom of the seventh gave Cedar Rapids a 3-2 lead. Kane County tied the game in the top of the eighth when Dan Vogelsbach's blooper dropped in front of a hard-charging Jeremias Pineda in right field. When it skipped away for a moment from Pineda, Bryan Rademacher kept coming all the way from first and scored on the single, sliding in ahead of the relay throw.

The Cougars (19-20) never got a runner farther than second over the final four innings.

Polanco drew a lead-off walk to open the 12th. Mauer then asked his clean-up hitter, Dalton Hicks, to put down a sacrifice bunt. He fouled off his first attempt before laying a perfectly placed bunt toward third.

Needless to say, Hicks hasn't been asked to bunt often.

"You know, we joked about that yesterday," Mauer said. "We had him bunt earlier this year, I think in Beloit. This was his second tonight. I asked him when the last time he put down a bunt

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and he said it was his freshman year in college."

Mauer had a couple of reasons for bunting with his slugging first baseman.

"He's a double-play candidate and they had just walked a guy," he said. "Then you take your chances with Harrison and (Adam Brett) Walker coming up. You have to figure one of them would probably give you the best chance."

Converted reliever Tyler Duffey had a strong outing for the Kernels, going 7 2/3 innings, allowing six hits and three runs. He has a 2.37 ERA.

"He's got three pitches and he can use them all," said Mauer of his right-hander. "He's not afraid of anybody and he pounds the zone. That's a pretty good hitting team (in Kane County) that he kept quiet for quite awhile."

Williams and Polanco each had three hits for Cedar Rapids (28-12). Soliman (3-1) pitched a 1-2-3 12th to gain the victory.

The two teams continue the series Saturday at 6:35 p.m. Jose Berrios (3-0) will pitch for Cedar Rapids. Pierce Johnson (1-3) is the scheduled Kane County starter.

KANE COUNTY (3): Chen, lf, 5 0 0 0, Rademacher, rf, 5 2 3 0, Vogelbach, 1b, 5 0 1 1, Candelario, 3b, 5 1 2 0, Shoulders, dh, 5 0 0 0, Contreras, c, 5 0 0 0, Hernandez, ss, 5 0 1 1, Amaya, 2b, 5 0 2 0, Zapata, cf, 5 0 1 0, Maples, p, 0 0 0 0, Castillo, p, 0 0 0 0, Dorris, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 45 3 10 2.

KERNELS (4): Buxton, cf, 5 0 0 0, Goodrum, ss, 6 0 1 0, Polanco, 2b, 5 2 3 0, Hicks, 1b, 4 0 1 0, Harrison, 3b, 6 0 1 1, Quesada, dh, 4 0 0 0, Walker, ph, 1 0 0 0, Grimes, c, 2 0 0 0, Pineda, rf, 5 2 0 0, Williams, lf, 4 0 3 2, Duffey, p, 0 0 0 0, Hurlbut, p, 0 0 0 0, Soliman, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 42 4 9 3.

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Kane County 100 000 110 000 - 3 10 1

Kernels 001 100 100 001 - 4 9 1

(One out when winning run scored)

Maples, Castillo (6), Dorris (11) and Contreras. Duffey, Hurlbut (8), Soliman (12) and Grimes. W - Soliman (3-1). L - Dorris (1-1). 2B - Rademacher (4), Candelario (13), Polanco 2 (12), Hicks (13), Williams (7). 3B - Williams 2 (2). SB - Hernandez (6), Pineda (3). S - Hicks. HBP - Grimes (by Maples). E - Candelario (12), Goodrum (8). T - 3:18. A - 2,151.