

Byron Buxton promoted to Fort Myers

Written by Jim Ecker

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Byron Buxton, the star center fielder who delighted Cedar Rapids baseball fans during his three months with the Kernels, was promoted to the Fort Myers Miracle in the Florida State League Sunday night.

Cedar Rapids Manager Jake Mauer informed the Metro Sports Report of the transaction shortly after the [Kernels defeated the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, 13-9, Sunday](#) in Grand Chute, Wis.

Buxton went 2-for-5 with a triple and RBI in his final game with the Kernels.

Buxton, 19, signed with the Minnesota Twins for \$6 million last year after being the No.2 overall pick in the 2012 draft. He was the starting center fielder in the Midwest League All-Star game Tuesday night and established himself as one of the top players in the league.

Buxton ranks first in the Midwest League in runs scored (68), triples (10), on-base percentage (.431), slugging percentage (.559) and OPS (on-base percentage + slugging percentage = .990).

He ranks second in the league with a .341 batting average, third in stolen bases (32) and tied for third in RBIs (55).

The Cedar Rapids Kernels play in the Class A Midwest League, while the Fort Myers Miracle play in the Advanced-A Florida State League.

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Mauer said no replacement has been named for Buxton on the Kernels' 25-man roster.

In addition to his exploits as a hitter and baserunner, Buxton made a series of sensational diving catches in center field for the Kernels. He was extremely popular with Kernels fans and spent 45 minutes signing autographs after this past Sunday's game at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

As it turned out, that was Buxton's final game in Cedar Rapids.

Buxton said last Sunday that he's improved as a ballplayer this year and has gotten himself ready for the next step.

"I feel like I did," he said at the time. "I did a whole lot better than previous years. I still have to work on getting better in every aspect of my game."

Buxton said last Sunday that he appreciates the warm welcome he received in Cedar Rapids.

"It's been good," he said. "I've got a lot of fans. I'm just trying not to disappoint them, just go out and play my hardest."

"I've had some good times," he said. "We won a lot of games, we clinched the playoffs. That's the good part about it, and just had a lot of fun here."

The Kernels finished in second place during the first half of the Midwest League campaign to clinch a playoff spot. The Kernels have a 44-28 overall record this season. Mauer said there were times this season when he stood in the third-base coaching box and admired the way Buxton ran the bases, especially when he went from first to third.

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"He's been our lynchpin," Mauer said previously. "He's handled himself very well. He brings a confidence about himself. He challenges his teammates, which is huge."

Minnesota Twins General Manager Terry Ryan watched Buxton play in Wisconsin over the weekend, the first time Ryan had seen Buxton play for the Kernels. Ryan [told the Metro Sports Report](#) before Sunday's game that he wanted to see if Buxton was ready for the next step.

The answer was yes.