

## Montanez pitches Kernels to 5th straight win

Written by Morgan Hawk

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PEORIA, Ill. – Josue Montanez led the Kernels to their fifth straight win with a 3-1 victory at Peoria on Sunday evening.

The Kernels have won 10 of their last 11 games and stretched their lead in the Midwest League's Western Division to 5.5 games over Quad Cities.

Montanez (5-5) went a season-high 7.2 innings and allowed only one run on seven hits. He struck out four and walked one. He has pitched at least seven innings in three straight starts.

Mike Gonzales put the Kernels in front 1-0 with a solo home run to right-center field in the fourth inning. It was the second homer of the season for Gonzales and his second against Peoria Chiefs pitching. Gonzales went deep against the Chiefs on July 24 for his other long ball.

The Kernels extended their lead to 3-0 with a pair of runs in the seventh inning. Travis Harrison started the frame by reaching first base on a hit by pitch. He then reached second base on an errant pickoff attempt by catcher Gerwuins Velazco. Joel Licon singled into left field to extend his hitting streak to 16 games. On the play, the ball got past left fielder Breyvic Valera, allowing Harrison to score and Licon to reach second base. Licon then scored on a two-out, RBI single by Jonathan Murphy.

The Chiefs committed four errors.

Peoria plated its lone run in the eighth inning. Charlie Tilson blooped a single into right field to start the frame. Valera then reached on a bunt single. A Montanez wild pitch put runners at second and third base. Jeremy Schaffer's sacrifice fly scored Tilson and moved Valera to third base. Montanez then struck out Bruce Caldwell before exiting with two outs in the inning and a runner at third base.

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Brian Gilbert came in and threw one pitch, getting Trevor Martin to chop out to third base and end the scoring threat. Gilbert sent the Chiefs down in order in the ninth inning, picking up his fourth save.

Kyle Helisek (7-5) took the loss for Peoria in 6.2 innings of work. He allowed three runs (two earned) on seven hits. He struck out eight and walked none. Joe Donofrio and Joe Scanio combined to pitch the final 2.1 innings, allowing no runs and no hits with three strikeouts.

The Kernels play at Peoria again Monday night.

KERNELS (3): Murphy, cf, 5 0 1 1, Goodrum, ss, 4 0 2 0, Kepler, 1b, 4 0 0 0, Walker, rf, 4 0 0 0, Gonzales, dh, 4 1 1 1, Harrison, 3b, 3 1 1 0, Licon, 2b, 4 1 1 0, Quesada, c, 4 0 1 0, Pineda, lf, 4 0 0 0. Totals 36 3 7 2.

PEORIA (1): McElroy, cf, 4 0 0 0, Tilson, rf, 4 1 2 0, Valera, lf, 4 0 1 0, Schaffer, 1b, 3 0 0 1, Caldwell, 2b, 3 0 1 0, Martin, dh, 4 0 0 0, Vargas, 3b, 3 0 2 0, Herrera, ss, 4 0 1 0, Velazco, c, 3 0 0 0, Walton, ph, 1 0 0 0. Totals 33 1 7 1.

Kernels 000 100 200 - 3 7 0

Peoria 000 000 010 - 1 7 4

Montanez, Gilbert (8) and Quesada. Helisek, Donofrio (7), Scanio (9) and Velazco. W-Montanez (5-5). L-Helisek (7-5). Sv-Gilbert (4). HR-Gonzales (2). SB-Licon (1). SF-Schaffer. E-Velazco (3), Valera (16), Caldwell (1), Herrera (4). T-2:23. A-2,196.