

Kernels blanked by Fort Wayne, 2-0

Written by S.D. Buhr
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Scoring runs had been no problem for the Cedar Rapids Kernels the past two weeks, but Fort Wayne pitchers put an end to that stretch of good fortune Sunday.

The Tin Caps blanked the Kernels, 2-0, Sunday afternoon before 2,432 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

The Kernels did not have a runner reach second base until the sixth inning when Michael Quesada and J.D. Williams opened the frame with back-to-back singles. But a failed bunt, a strikeout and a ground-out ended the home team's first, last and only threat of the day.

Cedar Rapids mustered just four hits, all singles, and No.9 batter Williams claimed two of them.

Fort Wayne hitters did not fare much better, with just five hits, but they scored on a bases-loaded ground-out in the second inning and on a sacrifice fly in the third.

The Kernels wasted efficient pitching in the game, which lasted just two hours and 14 minutes.

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Starter Ryan Eades (5-11) gave up five hits and one walk, while striking out a pair in six innings. Bullpen arms Alex Muren and Jared Wilson combined to throw three perfect innings for the Kernels.

“Four hits, that ain’t gonna do it,” Kernels Manager Jake Mauer said. “It’s a shame, too, because Eades threw the ball really good.

“If you can’t score a run, you ain’t gonna win.”

In addition to fine pitching, a couple of Kernels defenders also flashed some leather to keep the game close.

Second baseman Logan Wade made a diving stop on a ground ball up the middle in the second inning that would have driven in a run. And Jason Kanzler, who seems to be making at least one exceptional play in the outfield every game, added another to his total with a fifth-inning diving catch in shallow right-center field.

“He can play some center field,” Mauer said. “Covers a lot of ground. He’s been very good out there.”

The loss snapped the Kernels’ four game winning streak and knotted the series with the Tin Caps, 1-1. The two teams play the rubber match and series finale at 12:05 p.m. Monday.