

## Weary Kernels whiff 18 times in loss

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 25 August 2014 21:36 -

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DAVENPORT - Five hot days. Five road games. Five bus rides to the Mississippi River and back.

It's been an exhausting stretch for the Cedar Rapids Kernels, but at least the end is in sight with the Midwest League playoffs starting next week.

The weary Kernels struck out a season-high 18 times Monday night and lost to the Quad Cities River Bandits, 3-2, before 2,673 fans at Modern Woodmen Park in Davenport.

"Eighteen strikeouts," said Kernels Manager Jake Mauer with an unhappy whistle. "That's a lot of strikeouts.

"That's 18 of 27 outs they didn't have to do anything. The defense didn't have to work or catch a ball or make a play. That's just not acceptable."

The Kernels had not struck out more than 14 times in a game this season prior to Monday. "We probably surpassed that in the fifth inning," said Mauer. "It felt like it."

Everybody in the Cedar Rapids lineup struck out at least once. Chad Christensen fanned four times. Jonatan Hinojosa, Max Murphy and J.D. Williams struck out three times.

Three times, the Kernels struck out with the bases loaded to end a promising inning.

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"We had baserunners all over the place. Early. Late. Middle innings," said Mauer. "Put a ball in play and who knows what can happen."

Tanner Vavra, who was 2-for-2 at the time with a double, walk and hit-by-pitch, was the final victim for the third out in the ninth inning on a pitch that appeared to be wide of the strike zone. Vavra gave home plate umpire Andrew Chestnut an earful before slamming his bat in the bat rack in frustration.

Cedar Rapids pitchers struck out 14 River Bandits in eight innings, making for 32 K's in one ballgame. Kernels starter Stephen Gonsalves fanned 10 batters in five innings. He allowed only two hits, but one of them was a two-run homer by A.J. Reed.

The Kernels scored twice in the fourth inning on consecutive doubles by Vavra and Michael Quesada, followed by a single by Ryan Walker. They spent the rest of the night in frustration and left 12 runners on base.



Quad Cities took a 3-2 lead in the sixth inning on a towering home run down the right-field line by James Ramsay. Ramsay thought the ball had hooked foul before soaring over the foul pole and started back toward home plate, but the field umpire signaled a fair ball and home run.

Kernels pitcher Jared Wilson and catcher Quesada mildly questioned the ball, but they played on.

The Kernels are scheduled for one more commuter trip to Davenport on Tuesday to face the River Bandits again before opening a three-game series against Kane County at Veterans Memorial Stadium from Wednesday through Friday.

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Mauer has been trying to give his players as much rest as possible, but with only 12 position players there's only so much he can do.

"It's a tough part of the schedule. There's no doubt about it," he said. "But these are the type of games we're going to play when we get into the playoffs. They're going to be close games like this.

"When you only have three guys on the bench, there isn't a lot you can do. Some of these guys are going to have to wear it a little bit.

"I wouldn't mind rain tomorrow, that's for sure," he said, laughing.

The Kernels have clinched a playoff berth, but they still have not clinched a No. 1 seed for the playoffs that start next Wednesday. They are still in great shape, however, with a six-game lead over Wisconsin for the No. 1 seed with only seven games left in the regular season.

KERNELS (2): Hinojosa, dh, 5 0 1 0, Wade, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Christensen, 1b, 4 0 0 0, Swim, rf, 4 0 1 0, Murphy, cf, 4 0 0 0, Williams, lf, 5 0 1 0, Vavra, 2b, 3 1 2 0, Quesada, c, 3 1 2 1, Walker, ss, 4 0 1 1. Totals 35 2 8 2.

QUAD CITIES (3): Ramsay, rf, 4 1 2 1, Bottger, lf, 3 1 0 0, McDonald, dh, 3 0 1 0, Reed, 1b, 4 1 2 2, Davis, 3b, 4 0 0 0, Holberton, c, 2 0 0 0, Lindauer, ss, 2 0 0 0, Boyd, cf, 3 0 0 0, Parker, 2b, 3 0 0 0. Totals 28 3 5 3.

Kernels 000 200 000 - 2 8 0  
Quad Cities 000 201 00x - 3 5 2

Gonsalves, Wilson (6), Montanez (8) and Quesada. Scribner, Mills (4), Lee (6), Yuhl (9) and Holberton. W - Lee (8-6). L - Wilson (3-3). S - Yuhl (1). 2B - Vavra (13), Quesada (13), McDonald (25), Reed (7). HR - Reed (6), Ramsay (3). E - Holberton (9), Lee (3). T - 2:50. A -

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2,673.