

Gonzalez swings hot bat for Kirkwood

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 30 April 2013 20:49 -

Dairo Gonzalez did not speak a word of English when he moved from Cuba to Florida with his family when he was 14 years old, but he could sure swing a baseball bat.

He speaks English very well now. And he can still swing that bat.

Gonzalez, now 19 and a sophomore at Kirkwood Community College, went on a rampage last week when he went 17 for 30 with six homers and 18 RBIs to help the Eagles (27-13) get on the winning path again.

He's been named the ICCAC Player of the Week for his exploits as he warmed up with the favorable weather.

"I was swinging pretty good," he said Tuesday. "I was kind of hot."

Gonzalez kept swinging a hot stick Tuesday when he went 3-for-7 with two doubles and two RBIs as Kirkwood swept a doubleheader from Century College of Minnesota, 14-6 and 6-5, on a hot, sunny, wind-swept afternoon at the Kirkwood field.

Gonzalez hit .373 with 13 homers and 51 RBIs last season as a freshman at Kirkwood. He tied the school record with 24 doubles and was named first team all-conference, all-region and all-district.

He'd hit only two homers this season prior to last week as he searched for power in frigid conditions, but he got on a roll to spark the Eagles.

"It was pretty special," said KCC Coach Todd Rima. "He really carried us all week. His approach has been fantastic."

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"I'm really happy for him. He's really worked hard to get to this point. He deserves it."

Gonzalez had to learn a brand-new language when his family emigrated to Florida, but he found his new home to his liking.

"It was pretty nice," he said. "I was playing baseball in Cuba. I came here to play baseball and see if I can get better.

"I actually had to learn English. Now it's getting better."

Gonzalez has signed to play baseball at Missouri Baptist next year and will keep an eye on the Major League draft this June. "Oh yeah. I would love to be drafted," he said.

Gonzalez normally plays third base for Kirkwood, but he's also been the catcher in several games with No.1 backstop Greg Brodzinski lost for the rest of the season with a broken hand.

"I like it," said Gonzalez, who started the first game Tuesday behind the plate. "I'm having fun back there."

Gonzalez caught a few games for the Eagles last season and was considered the "emergency" catcher this year. Now there's an emergency and he's glad to help.

"He's really good back there," said Rima. "It might be a position he considers as he tries to get to the next level."

Kirkwood exploded for 11 runs in the second inning of the first game Tuesday and coasted to

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the 14-6 victory. The Eagles rallied from a 5-0 deficit to grab the nightcap, 6-5.

Jean Carlos Rodriguez went 6-for-9 in the doubleheader with three RBIs. Eric Schenck-Joblinske drove in five runs in the first game. Nick Jones went 3-for-4 in the first game with two RBIs and Shane Kemp was 3-for-3.

Kemp went 2-for-2 in the nightcap to finish the day 5-for-5. Shawn Simmons got the victory in the nightcap with four strong innings of relief and Tony Bakeris got the save with a 1-2-3 seventh.

Michael Amador was the winning pitcher in Game 1 and Ozzie Adams got the save.

Century College fell to 27-11.

Kirkwood is scheduled to play a doubleheader at Dakota Tech Wednesday, but Rima thinks the twinbill will be canceled due to threatening weather.

GAME 1

CENTURY (6): Schmitz, cf, 1 0 0 0, Turbak, ph/cf, 2 1 0 0, Nicolai, lf, 3 1 2 0, Horn, c, 2 0 0 1, Bucholz, ph, 1 0 0 0, Naasz, ss, 4 1 1 2, Beaulieu, dh, 4 1 1 0, Lindberg, 1b, 4 0 1 2, Otto, rf, 3 0 1 0, Anderson, 3b, 3 2 2 0, Nieman, 2b, 3 0 1 1, Dettman, p, 0 0 0 0, Pleimling, p, 0 0 0 0, Wahlberg, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 30 6 9 6.

KIRKWOOD (14): Schenck-Joblinske, lf, 5 2 2 5, Rodriguez, 3b/2b, 5 2 4 2, Gonzalez, c/3b, 5 2 2 2, Jones, dh/1b, 4 0 3 2, Colon, ss, 3 1 2 1, Feliz, cf, 4 1 0 0, Hernandez, 1b, 0 2 0 0, McMullen, pr, 0 0 0 0, Merced, c, 1 0 0 0, Adams, 2b/p, 3 1 0 0, Kemp, rf, 3 3 3 0, Bauzo, p, 0 0 0 0, Amador, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 33 14 16 12.

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Century 005 100 0 - 6 9 1
Kirkwood 2(11)0 001 x - 14 16 1

Dettman, Pleimling (2), Wahlberg (6) and Horn. Bauzo, Amador (4), Adams (5) and Gonzalez, Merced (5). W - Amador. L - Dettman. S - Adams. 2B - Beaulieu, Schenck-Joblinske, Rodriguez, Gonzalez 2, Kemp. 3B - Anderson.

GAME 2

CENTURY (5): Schmitz, rf, 3 0 0 0, Otto, cf, 3 1 1 1, Bucholz, c, 1 1 0 0, Naasz, ss, 4 1 1 1, Anderson, 3b, 4 1 1 1, Nicholai, lf, 3 1 1 0, Lindberg, 1b, 3 0 1 1, Beaulieu, dh, 3 0 1 1, Nieman, 2b, 3 0 1 0, Vien, p, 0 0 0 0, Evans, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 27 5 7 5.

KIRKWOOD (6): Schneck-Joblinske, cf, 3 1 1 1, Rodriguez, 1b/2b, 4 1 2 1, Gonzalez, 3b, 3 0 1 0, Jones, dh, 2 0 0 1, Colon, ss, 3 0 0 1, Croes, lf, 3 0 1 0, Merced, c, 3 0 0 0, Adams, 2b, 2 2 1 0, McMullen, pr, 0 0 0 0, Hernandez, 1b, 0 0 0 0, Kemp, rf, 2 2 2 0, Thompson, ph, 1 0 0 0, Triulzi, p, 0 0 0 0, Simmons, p, 0 0 0 0, Bakeris, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 26 6 8 4.

Century 014 000 0 - 5 7 0
Kirkwood 002 040 x - 6 8 1

Vien, Evans (5) and Bucholz. Triulzi, Simmons (3), Bakeris (7) and Merced. W - Simmons. L - Vien. S - Bakeris. 2B - Naasz, Kemp 2. SB - Nieman, Croes, Thompson.