

Pineda joins Kernels track team

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 15 May 2013 22:20 -

There's a new candidate for "Fastest Kernel" on the Cedar Rapids ballclub these days.

His name is Jeremias Pineda, a 22-year-old outfielder from the Dominican Republic who has speed to burn.

Pineda joined the Kernels Tuesday from extended spring training and made his presence felt Wednesday night as Cedar Rapids split a Midwest League doubleheader with the Burlington Bees before 1,603 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

Pineda entered the first game as a pinch-runner in the sixth inning, promptly stole a base, advanced to third on a ground ball and scored the go-ahead run on a wild pitch in a 6-5 victory.

Pineda went 1-for-3 in the nightcap and stole another base in a 6-4 loss to the Bees.

"He can fly. Yeah, he can really run," said Cedar Rapids Manager Jake Mauer.

"He's a high-energy guy. You saw what he could do in the first game. You get him on first and he's got a pretty good chance to steal a base, and if you hit a ball in the gap he's probably going to score."

Pineda spelled Byron Buxton in center field in Game 2 and can play all three outfield spots, giving Mauer more flexibility. Buxton, one of the top prospects in the Minnesota organization, served as the DH in the nightcap.

Pineda is not the only Kernel who can fly. Candido Pimentel, J.D. Williams and Buxton belong in that 100-meter dash as well.

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"I would like to see him, Pimentel, Buxton and Williams ... Put them all on the line and see who comes out," said Mauer, smiling at the concept. "If you ask J.D., he'll tell you he's the fastest. He'll tell you that all the time."

Who's the fastest?

"Of course I'm going to say me," said Williams, an outfielder from Florida. "Yeah, definitely. I'd get them at the tape."

Pimentel is a second baseman from the Dominican Republic. Buxton is from Georgia.

"That's how we score so many runs," said Williams. "A lot of RBIs. Balls in the gap, we have guys who can score from first."

Williams never got a chance to run track in high school. "My high school did not have a track team, so I never ran it, but I was always pretty fast," he said.

The Kernels have power and speed on this year's club, two reasons they sport the best record in the Midwest League at 26-12.

Jorge Polanco, a middle infielder from the Dominican Republic, and Niko Goodrum, a shortstop from Georgia, also can move on the bases.

"We do not have too many cloggers," said Mauer. "Hopefully we can score some runs that way."

The Kernels and Bees (12-22) finish their four-game series Thursday at 6:35 p.m. with lefthander Mason Melotakis on the mound for Cedar Rapids.

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GAME 1

BURLINGTON (5): Soto, ss, 3 1 0 0, K.Johnson, rf, 4 0 1 0, S.Johnson, 3b, 2 1 0 0, Hinkle, 1b, 3 0 0 0, Walsh, lf, 3 2 2 2, Bemboom, c, 3 0 1 1, Clarke, cf, 3 1 1 0, Ray, dh, 3 0 1 2. Totals 27 5 6 5.

KERNELS (6): Buxton, cf, 2 1 1 0, Goodrum, 3b, 3 1 1 2, Polanco, ss, 3 2 2 1, Hicks, 1b, 3 0 2 2, Walker, rf, 3 0 0 0, Harrison, dh, 3 0 1 0, Quesada, c, 3 0 1 0, Pineda, pr, 0 1 0 0, Arias, c, 0 0 0 0, Pimentel, 2b, 3 0 1 0, Williams, lf, 3 1 0 0. Totals 26 6 9 5.

Burlington 300 200 0 - 5 6 0
Kernels 004 011 x - 6 9 0

Keudell, Spomer & Bemboom. Boyd, Montanez (6) and Quesada, Arias (7). W - Montanez (1-0). L - Spomer (1-3). 2B - Walsh (1), K.Johnson (9), Harrison (14), Polanco (10), Hicks (12). 3B - Polanco (5). SB - S.Johnson (6), Pineda (1). T - 1:57.

GAME 2

BURLINGTON (6): Soto, ss, 2 0 0 0, K.Johnson, cf, 2 0 0 0, S.Johnson, dh, 2 1 1 1, Hinkle, 1b, 4 2 2 2, Walsh, rf, 4 1 1 0, Bolaski, 3b, 4 1 3 1, Moesquit, lf, 4 0 1 0, Martinez, c, 3 0 1 1, Toribio, 2b, 3 1 1 0. Totals 28 6 10 5.

KERNELS (4): Buxton, dh, 4 1 1 0, Goodrum, ss, 4 0 0 1, Polanco, 2b, 2 0 0 1, Hicks, 1b, 3 0 0 0, Walker, rf, 3 0 0 0, Harrison, 3b, 3 1 0 0, Grimes, c, 2 1 1 2, Pineda, cf, 3 0 1 0, Williams, lf, 1 1 0 0. Totals 25 4 3 4.

Burlington 012 011 1 - 6 10 2

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Kernels 000 200 2 - 4 3 1

Santos, Krehbiel (6), Diaz (7) and Martinez. Gruver, Muren (4), Burris (7) and Grimes. W - Santos (1-1). L - Gruver (2-1). 2B - Hinkle (8), Bolaski (6), Buxton (10). 3B - S.Johnson (1). HR - Hinkle (3), Grimes (2). SB - Toribio (10), Williams (8), Pineda (2). E - Toribio 2 (4). T - 2:21. A - 1,603.