

Kernels feast on Snappers, 9-0

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 13 April 2015 20:24 - Last Updated Monday, 13 April 2015 21:16



The Minnesota Twins have strict new dietary rules for the players in their organization this year. Fried foods, greasy burgers and pizza are out.

Healthy food is in.

That's all right with the Cedar Rapids Kernels, who are halfway home to earning a big feast at the Ox Yoke Inn in Amana. There's plenty on the Ox Yoke menu to make even the hungriest minor leaguer leave with a smile.

The red-shot Kernels crushed Beloit, 9-0, Monday night for their fifth straight victory to begin the season before 1,081 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

If the Kernels win 10 straight, the ballclub will treat the players to a special treat in Amana. The Kernels chowed down at the Ox Yoke Inn before the season began and are salivating about a return visit.

"That was a great place," said second baseman Pat Kelly, who belted a three-run homer in the third inning Monday night. "They had it all. It was awesome."

Roast beef, steak, chicken, ham, shrimp, pork, fish ... The Kernels know you can eat hearty and eat healthy at the Ox Yoke Inn. "Oh, there's plenty," said Kelly, smiling.

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The Kernels featured two homers, two triples and two doubles in their 14-hit attack. They starred at the plate and Felix Jorge starred on the mound for the Kernels with seven shutout innings that included 10 strikeouts and only two hits.

It was a winning combination.

Tyler Kuresa, a powerful 6-foot-4, 245-pound first baseman, walloped a long two-run homer to right-center in the second inning for the team's first home run of the season, beating Kelly to the punch by an inning.

"I'll tell you what, Kuresa hit the snot out of that thing. It was crushed," said Kernels Manager Jake Mauer.



"It was a changeup. A 1-0 changeup," said Kuresa. "They fed me a lot of change-ups and a lot of off-speeds last night, so I was looking for it a little bit. They did use that same sequence last night."

The Kernels were treated to a healthy meal of grilled chicken in their locker room after the game and there were no complaints about the menu.

Good nutrition is in, fatty foods are out, not just in the clubhouse but everywhere.

"They're trying to get them away from McDonald's, which would be bad for me, because I love McDonald's," joked Mauer. "Pizza, fried chicken ... all the stuff that tastes good are probably

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out.

"Not for us, though," he added quickly with a grin. "The staff, we can do whatever."

Jorge, who spent part of the 2014 season with the Kernels before being shipped down to Elizabethton, was in total control on the mound. He allowed a leadoff single in the top of the first inning, but did not yield another hit until the seventh.

He walked only two batters and got two of his 10 strikeouts in the seventh inning when he appeared to be tiring a little.

"Jorge threw the ball really good. Really good," said Mauer. "Fastball command. Very confident. He looked a lot different than he did last year, especially that first half (of the season). Good for him.

"He went down to E-town and worked really hard. Hopefully he can continue to do that."

Nick Gordon and Max Murphy had three hits for the Kernels. Trey Vavra, Kuresa, Kelly and Tanner English had two hits apiece. Gordon and Murphy had triples. Kelly and English had doubles.

Excellent hitting and excellent pitching, and now the Kernels are halfway home to another excellent meal at the Ox Yoke.

"It was very impressive. Can't complain," said Mauer. "Pretty good start."

The Kernels are hitting a lusty .316 as a team and the pitching staff has a 1.80 earned run average through five games.

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Cedar Rapids and Beloit finish their three-game series Tuesday night at 6:35.

BELOIT (0): Vertigan, cf, 4 0 1 0, Mercedes, 3b, 4 0 2 0, Bennie, dh, 3 0 0 0, Martinez, lf, 4 0 1 0, Kuhn, 1b, 3 0 0 0, Duinker, rf, 4 0 0 0, Diaz, ss, 3 0 0 0, Gilbert, 2b, 3 0 1 0, Chavez, c, 3 0 0 0. Totals 31 0 5 0.

KERNELS (9): Hinojosa, 3b, 3 1 0 1, Gordon, ss, 4 1 3 0, Larson, dh, 3 0 0 1, Murphy, rf, 5 1 3 0, Vavra, lf, 4 2 2 1, Kuresa, 1b, 4 2 2 2, Kelly, 2b, 4 2 2 3, Navarreto, c, 4 0 0 0, English, cf, 3 0 2 0. Totals 34 9 14 8.

Beloit 000 000 000 - 0 5 1

Kernels 034 101 00x - 9 14 0

Mendez, Torres (4), Miller (6) and Chavez. Jorge, Theofanopoulos (8) and Navarreto. W - Jorge (1-0). L - Mendez (0-1). 2B - Martinez (1), Kelly (1), English (1). 3B - Murphy (1), Gordon (2). HR - Kuresa (1), Kelly (1). SB - English (2). E - Diaz. T - 2:23. A - 1,081.

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