

River Bandits edge Kernels, 6-5

Written by S.D. Buhr
Sunday, 17 May 2015 17:13 -



The Quad Cities River Bandits started the season hot and have gotten hotter from there, improving their record to 29-8 Sunday with a 6-5 win over the Cedar Rapids Kernels at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

The Kernels did their best to slow down the Bandits' momentum, but fell just short, before a crowd of 1,610, Quad Cities won 2-of-3 in the series, building their Western Division lead over the Kernels to 6 1/2 games.

The Bandits have lost only one series all season, dropping two of three games to Burlington Bees in late April.

Sunday's game was a see-saw affair, with the River Bandits jumping up 1-0 in the top of the third inning and the Kernels moving ahead 2-1 in their half of the same inning.

Pat Kelly tripled to lead off the inning and scored on Blake Schmit's single. Tanner English was the first of three batters hit by pitches in the inning and he scored to give the Kernels a lead when TJ White was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded.

White legged out an infield single in the fifth inning and scored to move the Kernels in to a 3-1 lead.

Quad Cities battled back with two runs in the sixth inning to tie, but Schmit put the Kernels back in the lead 4-3 in the home half of the sixth, scoring on a Zack Larson RBI single.

The Bandits reclaimed the lead, 5-4 with a pair of runs in the seventh inning.

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Trey Vavra knotted the game 5-5 in the eighth with his team-leading fifth home run of the season.

Bandits centerfielder Bobby Boyd led off the visitors' ninth with his third consecutive double and came around to score on an RBI single by Jacob Knottingham.

Kernels manager Jake Mauer was philosophical about the loss.

"They battled, that was the most important thing," said Mauer of his team's effort. "It would have been nice to have won it, absolutely, but I think more importantly they stayed in it and kept fighting back."

Jared Wilson worked six innings for the Kernels, surrendering three runs on seven hits while walking three and striking out four.

Zack Tillery (3-1) took the loss, finishing up the final three innings and surrendering the final three Bandits runs.

Most importantly, however, Tillery gave the rest of the Kernels bullpen a much-needed day off after enduring three extra-inning games in the last five days.

"God bless Tillery, he did all he could," Mauer said afterward.

"We're a little thin in the bullpen, we knew that going in," Mauer added. "We kept battling back, but when you play three extra-inning games in five days, it kind of depletes who you want to have out there."

The Twins will attempt to address some of the Kernels' bullpen issues with a pair of roster

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changes.

Relief pitchers CK Irby and Sam Clay are headed back to Extended Spring Training and the Twins will send up pitchers Yorman Landa and Keaton Steele to replace them.

Mauer indicated Steele, the Twins' eighth round draft pick a year ago, would be on the mound when the Kernels resume their suspended game with the Peoria Chiefs on Monday in Peoria.

QUAD CITIES (6): Boyd, cf, 5 2 3 0, Hyde, 2b, 3 1 1 0, Fisher, dh, 4 1 1 0, Nottingham, C, 4 0 3 2, Tanielu, 3b, 1 1 0 2, McMullen, rf, 4 1 2 2, Muniz, 1b, 4 0 1 0, Martin, lf, 4 0 0 0, Trompiz, ss, 4 0 0 0. Totals 33 6 11 6.

KERNELS (5): English, cf, 4 1 1 0, Scmmit, ss, 4 1 1 1, Vavra, lf, 4 1 1 1, Murphy, rf, 5 0 0 0, Larson, dh, 5 0 1 1, White, 3b, 4 1 2 1, Doe, c, 5 0 1 0, Kuresa, 1b, 4 0 2 0, Gordon, pr, 0 0 0 0, Kelly, 2b, 5 1 2 0. Totals 40 5 11 4.

Quad Cities ▯ ▯ 001 002 201 - 6 11 3
Kernels ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ 002 011 010 - 5 11 1

James, Thompson (6), Peterson (9) and Nottingham. Wilson, Tillery (7) and Doe. WP - Thompson (1-0). LP - Tillery (3-1) 2B - Nottingham (6), Boyd, 3 (9), Kuresa (5). 3B - Kelly (2), English (2). HR - McMullen (3), Vavra (4). E - Hyde 2 (7), Trompiz (11), Murphy (2). T - 2:43. A - 1,610.