

Rosario happy to be healthy again

Written by Jim Ecker

Sunday, 05 July 2015 16:53 - Last Updated Sunday, 05 July 2015 17:17



Cedar Rapids Manager Jake Mauer was not trying to be mean or insensitive when he removed Randy Rosario from Sunday's game against Burlington with two outs in the bottom of the fifth inning and the Kernels holding a commanding 7-0 lead.

Rosario made his first start for the Kernels since having Tommy John surgery on his left elbow in May of 2014 and he was on a strict pitch count Sunday, even though he needed just one more out to qualify for the victory.

Rosario got a strikeout for the second out in the fifth inning with his 80th pitch and Mauer promptly came out to the mound and made a change.

"That's OK," Rosario said with a big smile after the 9-6 victory, signing autographs for Kernels fans while sitting in the outfield grass. "I say to Jake, 'Thank-you.'"

Rosario began the 2014 season with the Kernels and made three starts with the club before going on the disabled list April 23. He had surgery a few weeks after that and began the long rehab process, so Sunday's start against Burlington was a big hurdle to overcome on his road back.

Rosario's overall health and welfare are much more important than getting him a "W" in the boxscore.

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"He understands," said Mauer. "You'd like to get him a win, obviously, but now all of a sudden it (the next hitter) turns into a 10-pitch at-bat and you just don't want that.

"If we have a guy coming off an injury, it doesn't matter who it is. If the batboy is out there coming off an injury, we wouldn't let him go over (the pitch count)."

Rosario allowed only four singles in his 4 2/3 innings. He struck out five batters with no walks.

"I feel great," said Rosario, who is from the Dominican Republic and signed with the Twins when he was 16 years old. "It's my first time after surgery, so I feel nice.

"I feel like normal. Better than ever. I'll get them next time. Jake says I have like 90 pitches next time."

Mauer liked what he saw from the 21-year-old southpaw, who became the 14th different starting pitcher for the Kernels this season in 81 games.

"He did a fine job," said Mauer. "He wasn't as sharp as he can be, but it's his first outing since getting hurt here last year.

"He's got a smooth arm action. I think he's going to be pretty good. We've got to get him some experience. He's barely a year out from Tommy John, so he's going to be pretty good.

"He's a positive kid, he's a happy kid," said Mauer. "He's got a really good personality, which is going to serve him really well. His English is excellent. He's really worked hard on it.

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"And he's got a really good arm. No doubt about it."

The Kernels (48-33) scored seven runs in the first three innings and finished with 14 hits. Jorge Fernandez went 3-for-5 with two doubles and four RBIs. Brian Navaretto was 3-for-4 with a double and two RBIs.

Edgar Corcino and Nick Gordon had two hits. Brett Doe socked his third home run.

The Kernels host Beloit Monday at 6:35 p.m.

BURLINGTON (6): Yacinich, ss, 5 1 2 1, Arakawa, 2b, 5 0 1 0, Allen, rf, 5 1 2 1, Wass, c, 4 1 1 2, Houchins, 3b, 5 0 2 1, Flair, dh, 5 1 2 1, Mateo, 1b, 4 1 2 0, Gretzky, lf, 3 1 0 0, Salcedo, cf, 4 0 2 0. Totals 40 6 14 6.

KERNELS (9): Corcino, rf, 4 2 2 0, Gordon, ss, 5 1 2 0, Larson, lf, 4 1 0 0, Murphy, rf, 4 1 1 0, Doe, dh, 5 1 1 1, Fernandez, 1b, 5 2 3 4, White, 3b, 4 0 1 0, Navarreto, c, 4 1 3 2, Kelly, 2b, 4 0 1 0. Totals 39 9 14 7.

Burlington ▯ 000 000 105 - 6 14 3
Kernels ▯ ▯ ▯ 322 000 20x - 9 14 1

Jewell, Bolaski (2) and Wass. Rosario, Bixler (5), Theofanopoulos (8) and Navarreto. W - Bixler (1-0). L - Jewell (4-4). 2B - Mateo (1), Wass (11), Gordon (10), Fernandez 2 (14), Navarreto (4). HR - Flair (1), Doe (3). SB - Corcino (5), Gordon (19). E - Yanich (13), Houchins (7), Mateo (1), White (13). T - 2:21. A - 5,645.