

Defense not enough for Kernels

Written by S.D. Buhr
Friday, 17 July 2015 21:35 -

The Cedar Rapids Kernels showed outstanding defense against the visiting Burlington Bees on Friday night, but the offense wasn't nearly as good.

Burlington has just enough offense of its own to down the Kernels, 3-1, before a crowd of 4,189 at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

Center fielder Tanner English started the game by flagging down a deep line drive near the left-center field wall off the bat of Tim Arakawa.

In the ninth inning, catcher Brian Navarro fielded an attempted suicide squeeze bunt by Burlington shortstop (and former Iowa Hawkeye) Jake Yacinich in front of the plate, tagged Arakawa trying to score and then threw out Yacinich at first base to complete the double play.

Sandwiched between those efforts, Pat Kelly racked nine assists in just his second game this season at third base for Cedar Rapids. Kelly also contributed a pair of hits to the Kernels' attack.

"Pat played well," manager Jake Mauer observed afterward. "He played (third base) quite a bit in spring training and instructional league. He looked pretty comfortable. Moved good, couple of bunts he came in on the ball good. He played very, very well. Swung the bat better, too."

The offense was a different story as the Kernels were 0 for 5 with runners in scoring position.

Their only run on the night was scored in the home half of the third inning, without the benefit of even a single hit.

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English reached to lead off the inning when Arakawa, the Bees' second baseman, muffed a grounder, then compounded his error by throwing the ball away, allowing English to advance to second base. Then a wild pitch bounced away from Burlington catcher Wade Wass and when Wass had trouble locating the ball, English came around to score all the way from second base.

The Kernels matched the Bees with eight hits in the game, but none of those hits came from the middle of the Cedar Rapids batting order. The fourth, fifth and sixth hitters in the order went hitless in a combined 12 at-bats and left nine runners on base.

That futility did not go unnoticed by their manager.

"We're having a real hard time swinging the bats," Mauer said. "The middle of the order is killing us, just killing us. Poor at-bats. Just can't kind of get out of our own way. Doing the same things over and over again."

Nick Gordon did extend his hitting streak to 16 games, lining a single to left field in the Kernels' half of the first inning. That streak is the longest by a Kernels batter this season.

Edgar Corcino entered the night with a .385 batting average in his last 10 games and added three more singles on Friday.

Kernels pitcher Randy Rosario (1-1) entered Friday's start with a perfect 0.00 ERA through his first two starts covering 10 2/3 innings of work since joining the Kernels and he extended that streak another 4 1/3 innings to begin his night against the Bees.

The streak ended with a two-RBI double by Arakawa with one out in the Burlington fifth.

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Rosario's night ended after the fifth inning, giving up just those two runs on three hits, a pair of walks and a hit batsman. He struck out three.

Luke Bard relieved Rosario to start the sixth and threw a pair of shutout innings, striking out two.

The Bees added their third run off reliever Randy LeBlanc in the eighth.

Friday's game was the final meeting of the season between the two teams. The Kernels won the season series, 7-6.

Cedar Rapids opens a road series Saturday at Quad Cities.

BURLINGTON (3): Arakawa, 2b, 4 0 3 2, Yacinich, ss, 5 0 1 0, Flair, 1bh, 4 0 0 0, Allen, rf, 4 0 0 0, Houchins, 3b, 4 0 0 0, Wass, c, 3 1 2 0, Mateo, dh, 3 1 2 1, Delgado, lf, 3 1 0 0, Hermosillo, cf, 3 0 0 0. Totals 33 3 8 3.

KERNELS (1): English, cf, 4 1 0 0, Gordon, ss, 3 0 1 0, Corcino, rf, 4 0 3 0, Murphy, lf, 4 0 0 0, Real, dh, 4 0 0 0, Kuresa, 1b, 4 0 0 0, Navarreto, c, 4 0 1 0, Kelly, 2b, 4 0 2 0, Miller, 2b, 3 0 1 0. Totals 34 1 8 0.

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Kernels ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ 001 000 000 - 1 ▯ 8 0

Bolaski, Alonzo (6), Parades (9) and Wass. Rosario, Bard (6), LeBlanc (8) and Navarreto. WP - Bolaski (6-6), LP - Rosario (1-1). S - Paredes (16). 2B - Wass (12), Arakawa (3), 3B - Wass (2), Arakawa (1). E - Arakawa (2), Flair (1). T - 2:29. A - 4,189.