

Jorge is quality hurler for Kernels

Written by S.D. Buhr

Tuesday, 21 July 2015 21:32 - Last Updated Tuesday, 21 July 2015 21:39



There are no sure things in baseball, but the Cedar Rapids Kernels getting a quality start from Felix Jorge comes pretty close.

The 21-year-old Dominican held the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers to two runs in seven innings Tuesday night, leading the Kernels to a 6-2 victory before 2,236 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

Jorge has pitched at least six innings while holding opponents to three runs or less (the definition of a quality start) in each of his last 14 starts and 15 out of 16 times this season.

Asked if he knew how many consecutive quality starts he has, the young righthander knew exactly the right answer. "Fourteen," he replied with a slight smile.

"He's pretty smart," Kernels Manager Jake Mauer said. "He looked a lot different than he did April a year ago, didn't he? Very impressive.

"He's worked his tail off and he's still young," said Mauer. "I think he's going to get bigger and stronger. He's got potential. He's a guy we really turn the ball over to to get us back on track.

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"He's done it numerous times. Saved the bullpen. We were pretty thin after yesterday (a 14-5 loss to Quad Cities). We only had to use one guy and that really helped."

Entering the game, Jorge led the Midwest league in earned run average and multiple other statistical categories, including lowest opponent batting average and fewest hits/walks per inning.

He also showed he knows how to use the leather attached to his non-throwing hand, cleanly fielding five ground balls and starting a pair of double plays.

Seven Kernels contributed at least one hit to provide the necessary offense, out-hitting Wisconsin 12-5.



"It's pretty nice to have consistency up and down the lineup tonight," third baseman Pat Kelly said. "It's good to just get everyone rolling again."

Kelly, hitting just .206 entering the game, had two hits in three at-bats with a walk and a pair of RBIs. He's hit .333 in his last six games.

"I'm just trying to relax a little bit more, trying to keep it simple," Kelly said. "Trying to work on what Tommy (hitting coach Tommy Watkins)

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and Jake are trying to get across to me. I feel a lot better up there. I'm just trying to simplify things and make it easier on myself."

The game was a see-saw affair through five innings.

Nick Gordon's RBI single drove in Tanner English with the game's first run in the home half of the third inning, but Wisconsin matched that with a tying run in the fourth.

Kelly singled in Brian Navarreto in the fourth to re-take the lead, 2-1. Once again, the visitors tied the game with a run in the top of the fifth.

English put the home team back on top for good with a lead-off home run to deep left-center field in the fifth.

"That one felt really good," English admitted. "He threw me a change-up and kind of hung it upstairs and that's a really good pitch to hit. I kind of got the barrel on it and it went out."

The Kernels added three insurance runs in the sixth inning with the help of some sloppy Wisconsin fielding and RBI singles by Kelly and Sean Miller.

In addition to Kelly, the Kernels got a pair of hits from English, Gordon, Miller and newcomer Austin Diemer.

Luke Bard threw two scoreless innings in relief of Jorge.

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Mauer informed the media that pitcher Chris Mazza has been released by the Twins, though an announcement will not be made until Wednesday. Mauer indicated he was unsure what corresponding roster move would be made to fill Mazza's roster spot.

The Kernels (55-41) and Wisconsin (31-64) play an afternoon game at 12:05 p.m. Wednesday.

WISCONSIN (2): Allemand, ss, 4 0 0 0, Sharkey, 1b, 3 1 1 0, Leal, dh, 3 0 0 0, Rubio, rf, 4 0 2 1, McCall, c, 4 0 0 0, Matos, lf, 3 1 1 0, Meyer, cf, 3 0 0 0, Neuhaus, 2b, 3 0 0 0, Aviles, 3b, 3 0 1 1. Totals 30 2 5 2.

KERNELS (6): English, cf, 4 2 2 1, Gordon, ss, 4 0 2 1, Corcino, rf, 4 0 1 0, Real, dh, 4 0 0 0, Kuresa, 1b, 3 1 0 0, Navarreto, c, 3 2 1 0, Diemer, lf, 4 0 2 0, Kelly, 3b, 3 1 2 2, Miller, 2b, 4 0 2 1. Totals 33 6 12 5.

Wisconsin 000 110 000 - 2 5 1

Kernels 001 113 00x - 6 12 1

Carver, Lieser (6), Curtis (8) and McCall. Jorge, Bard (8) and Navarreto. W - Jorge (5-3). L - Carver (0-1). 2B - Sharkey (8), Gordon 2 (140). 3B - Matos (2). HR - English (4). E - Matos (17), E - Kelly (4). T - 2:13. A - 2,236.