

## Kernels end layoff with clean sweep

Written by S.D. Buhr

Saturday, 13 April 2013 22:25 - Last Updated Saturday, 13 April 2013 22:28

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CLINTON - What do baseball players do for four days when the weather refuses to allow them to play baseball?

The Cedar Rapids Kernels had to figure out their own answers to that question after a combination of rain and snow kept them from playing ballgames in Wisconsin against the Timber Rattlers Tuesday and Wednesday nights, as well as Thursday and Friday nights in Clinton.

But after four straight postponements, the Kernels finally got to play baseball again on Saturday and they took advantage of the opportunity by sweeping a doubleheader from the LumberKings in Clinton, 4-3 and 2-1, to raise their record to 6-1.

The Kernels kept ready for their return to action by working out indoors after returning from Wisconsin Wednesday night and even made use of the artificial turf at Kingston Stadium to get some defensive work in and, in the process, give their infield at Perfect Game Field a chance to dry out.

The time off also gave a number of the players an opportunity to catch "42" on Friday night. The Jackie Robinson bio-pic made an impression on a number of the players. The consensus review from those players asked for an opinion on the film can be summed up with, "It was REALLY good!"

By 4 p.m. Saturday, however, it was back to business for the Kernels.

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In the first game, the Kernels took advantage of 10 walks to earn the 4-3 win. Cedar Rapids scored all four of its runs in the fourth inning, sending 10 hitters to the plate in the stanza.

Five Kernels walked in that inning, to go with a Niko Goodrum double and a Byron Buxton infield single. Hudson Boyd worked five innings to earn the win. Brett Lee and Chris Mazza each pitched an inning to seal the win.

The second game turned into more of pitchers' duel after the Kernels scored twice in the first inning thanks to two walks against Clinton starter Tyler Pike, followed by a Jorge Polanco single and Dalton Hicks double.

The LumberKings got on the board immediately in their half of the first inning on a Jbari Henry leadoff home run. Kernels pitcher Mason Melotakis gave up two singles in the first inning as well, but went on to retire the next 11 hitters he faced. Steven Gruver locked up the win with two scoreless innings of relief work.

Melotakis attributed at least some of his success to a new pitch.

"I got a new curveball grip just three days ago. It seemed to work out," he said. "It was good to mix in three different pitches."

Was it that new curveball that Henry hit out of the ballpark to start the game?

"No," Melotaks said with a laugh, "it was the 'I don't want to walk you fastball.' Not a great way to lead off a game, but my arm's getting in more and more shape, getting stronger."

Melotakis struck out seven hitters, but was nearly matched strikeout for strikeout by Pike who struck out six Kernels in his four innings of work.

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Cedar Rapids pitching coach Gary Lucas was pleased with all of his pitchers.

"It was kind of a pitchers night, a little cold. Both staffs tried to go after the hitters," he said.

"It worked out in our favor tonight. The starters maybe had some jitters. (Melotakis) got his rhythm going. Good to see him get past a rough first inning."

The Kernels are scheduled to return to Clinton (3-6) Sunday for another doubleheader at noon.

### GAME 1

CEDAR RAPIDS (4): Buxton, cf, 3 0 1 1, Polanco, 2b, 2 0 0 0, Jimenez, dh, 3 0 0 1, Hicks, 1b, 3 0 1 0, Walker, rf, 3 1 0 0, Harrison, 3b, 4 0 0 0, Goodrum, ss, 3 1 2 0, Grimes, c, 2 1 0 0, Williams, lf, 0 1 0 1. Totals 23 4 4 3.

CLINTON (3): Marte, ss, 4 0 1 0, Pizzano, dh, 3 1 2 0, Pimentel, lf, 3 0 0 0, Kivlehan, 3b, 3 1 2 2, Henry, cf, 2 0 0 0, Guerrero, rf, 3 0 0 0, Ard, 1b, 3 1 1 0, Marlette, c, 2 0 0 0, Hebert, pr, 0 0 0 0, Lopes, 2b, 2 0 0 0. Totals 26 3 6 3.

Kernels        000 400 0 - 4 4 1  
LumberKings 200 010 0 - 3 6 1

Boyd, Lee (6), Mazza (7) and Grimes. Anderson, Leone (4), Hauser (7) and Marlette. W - Boyd (1-0). L - Anderson (0-1). S - Mazza (2). 2B - Hicks (4), Goodrum 2 (2), Ard (1). HR - Kivlehan (2). E - Harrison (2), Kivlehan (1). T - 2:03.

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### GAME 2

KERNELS (2): Buxton, cf, 3 1 0 0, Pimentel, 2b, 2 1 1 0, Polanco, dh, 3 0 1 0, Hicks, 1b, 3 0 1 2, Walker, rf, 3 0 0 0, Harrison, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Goodrum, ss, 3 0 0 0, Arias, c, 3 0 0 0, Williams, lf, 2 0 0 0. Totals 25 2 3 2.

CLINTON (1): Henry, cf, 3 1 1 1, Pizzano, lf, 3 0 1 0, Pimentel, dh, 3 0 0 0, Kivlehan, 3b, 3 0 1 0, Guerrero, rf, 3 0 0 0, Lara, 1b, 3 0 0 0, Marte, pr, 0 0 0 0, Lopes, 2b, 3 0 1 0, Tanabe, c, 3 0 0 0, Hebert, ss, 2 0 0 0. Totals 26 1 4 1.

Kernels 200 000 0 - 2 3 1

LumberKings 100 000 0 - 1 4 1

Melotakis, Gruver (6) and Arias. Pike, Vedo (5) and Tanabe. W - Melotakis (1-1). L - Pike (0-2). S - Gruver (1). 2B - Hicks (5). HR - Henry (1). SB - Williams (5), Hebert (2). E - Goodrum (3), Hebert (1). T - 1:57. A - 2,263.