

Kernels bitten by Timber Rattlers, 14-2

Written by S.D. Buhr

Monday, 15 April 2013 22:36 - Last Updated Monday, 15 April 2013 23:01



After being idled by weather-related postponements for four straight days last week, playing two doubleheaders in Clinton over the weekend and facing four more games over the next three days, what Cedar Rapids Kernels Manager Jake Mauer needed on Monday night was a game where he could rest most of his pitching staff to prepare for yet another doubleheader Tuesday night.

What he got, instead, was what the Kernels skipper labeled afterward as, "a good-fashioned (butt) whipping."

The visiting Wisconsin Timber Rattlers forced Mauer to use four pitchers in a 14-2 thrashing in front of 703 fans on a chilly April night at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

The Kernels find themselves in the middle of what could be a stretch of playing eight games in five days, thanks to all of last week's postponements. And suddenly, the six-man rotation that Mauer and pitching coach Gary Lucas announced they would start the season with is actually one or two arms short of what they'll need.

Four of the team's starting pitchers started games Saturday and Sunday in Clinton. David Hurlbut got his second start of the year on Monday night and the final man in the rotation, Brett Lee, is scheduled to get his first start of the season in the first game of Tuesday's doubleheader against the Timber Rattlers at 5 p.m.

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That leaves Mauer and Lucas looking for arms to start the nightcap on Tuesday as well as Wednesday's series finale. It won't be easy and going through four pitchers on Monday night won't make that task any easier.

"We need some guys in our bullpen to throw more than an inning. We can't just have one-inning guys. That's not gonna work," said Mauer. "We had guys trying to flip things in real soft - ball one, ball two - that's usually what happens. So we've gotta tighten it up a little bit and keep the ball down."



It's not just the pitching that has the Kernels skipper concerned, however.

"Our defense hasn't been spectacular either. You've gotta protect your pitcher," he said. "If he makes pitches, you gotta get 'em out and we're having a hard time doing that the last two days."

The night didn't start out like the disaster it would turn out to be, however.

Adam Brett Walker caught up to a 95 mph fastball from Timber Rattlers pitcher Damien Magnifico in the second inning and launched it off the batters eye beyond the 400-foot sign in straightaway center field to pull the Kernels even at 1-1.

Shortstop Niko Goodrum added a double off Magnifico in the same inning, but was left stranded. Those would turn out to be the only two hits the Kernels would get off of the

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hard-throwing Magnifico during his five innings on the mound.

Kernels center fielder Byron Buxton singled and Travis Harrison added his fifth double of the season, both off Rattler relief pitcher Leonard Lorenzo. Midwest League Player of the Week Dalton Hicks added a home run in the ninth inning for the Kernels, his third home run of the season.

Those, along with Walker's home run and Goodrum's double, would constitute the sum total of the Kernels' hits on the evening.

Meanwhile, Wisconsin hitters touched Kernels pitching for 16 hits, including home runs by Rattlers first baseman Mike Garza, third baseman Jose Sermo and center fielder Tyrone Taylor.

David Hurlbut survived five innings of work, giving up three runs on seven hits and two walks, while striking out one Timber Rattler hitter.

Matt Tomshaw came on to relieve Hurlbut in the sixth inning. Tomshaw faced just four hitters in the sixth inning, but he got roughed up for six runs on six hits while recording just one out in his second inning of work.

Josue Montanez entered for Tomshaw with one out in the seventh inning and got the final two outs of the inning on consecutive ground balls. Montanez, however, ran into his own share of problems in the eighth inning, giving up five runs on just two hits and two walks.

None of the five runs charged to Montanez were earned, however, as they all scored after a three-base error by Walker. Chris Mazza, the fourth Kernels pitcher in the game, pitched a clean ninth inning.

Before the game, the Kernels helped celebrate "Jackie Robinson Day" across all of

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professional baseball by honoring Robinson's memory with a video montage. A moment of silence was also observed, prior to the singing of the National Anthem, to honor the victims of the bombings in Boston earlier Monday at the Boston Marathon.

WISCONSIN (14): Taylor, cf, 6 1 3 4, Arcia, ss, 6 0 0 0, Haniger, rf, 6 0 1 0, Berberet, c, 4 2 1 0, Coulter, dh, 5 1 1 0, Sermo, 3b, 4 3 3 3, Garza, 1b, 5 2 2 1, McFarland, 2b, 5 3 3 0, Reed, lf, 3 2 2 4, Magnifico, p, 0 0 0 0, Lorenzo, p, 0 0 0 0, Fernandez, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 44 14 16 12.

KERNELS (2): Buxton, cf, 2 0 1 0, Jimenez, lf, 1 0 0 0, Pimentel, dh, 4 0 0 0, Polanco, 2b, 4 0 0 0, Hicks, 1b, 4 1 1 1, Walker, rf, 4 1 1 1, Harrison, 3b, 4 0 1 0, Goodrum, ss, 2 0 1 0, Rodriguez, c, 3 0 0 0, Williams, lf/cf, 3 0 0 0, Hurlbut, p, 0 0 0 0, Tomshaw, p, 0 0 0 0, Montanez, p, 0 0 0 0, Mazza, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 31 2 5 2.

Wisconsin 010 200 650 - 14 16 1

Kernels 010 000 001 - 2 5 3

Magnifico, Lorenzo (6), Fernandez (9) and Berberet. Hurlbut, Tomshaw (6), Montanez (7), Mazza (9) and Rodriguez. W - Magnifico (2-0). L - Hurlbut (1-1). 2B - Reed (1), Coulter (2), McFarland (1), Berberet (2), Goodrum (3), Harrison (5). 3B - McFarland (1), Reed (1). HR - Garza (1), Sermo (1), Taylor (1), Walker (1), Hicks (3). SB - Haniger (2), Sermo (2), Pimentel (3), Buxton (4). E - Arcia (1), Harrison (5), Williams (1), Walker (1). T - 2:48. A - 703.