

Kernels close door after 15-1 drubbing

Written by Mike Condon

Saturday, 08 June 2013 22:59 - Last Updated Saturday, 08 June 2013 23:01



Kane County closed the door early on a sliding Cedar Rapids Kernels team Saturday night. And following the 15-1 defeat, Kernels Manager Jake Mauer had the clubhouse door closed for a meeting.

Cedar Rapids was never in the opener of the three-game series before a fireworks night crowd of 5,251 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

The loss, the third straight for Cedar Rapids (37-23) combined with Beloit's win over Burlington, cut the Kernels' lead to 1 1/2 games in the Midwest League's Western Division. The magic number for a playoff spot did fall to six as Quad Cities lost at Peoria.

Kane County pounded out 18 hits, including four home runs and four doubles off five Cedar Rapids pitchers.

Once the clubhouse doors opened, Mauer expressed his disappointment at the effort put forth Saturday night. That hadn't been a problem before, even during other down times in the first 60 games.

"We kinda backed off a little bit once we started getting hit," Mauer said. "We let them off the hook early. We had a chance to score and didn't.

"The ball is rolling downhill, so we had to have a little meeting," he continued. "This isn't going the right way. If you are competing and things don't go your way, I don't have a problem.

"Sometimes, if you make a mistake, it needs to be an aggressive mistake and we're just not being aggressive right now."

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Mauer didn't single out any individuals, but did say the players need to work through it and do the job.

"We can't catch the ball for them. We can't throw it for them, we can't hit it for them," he said. "Sometimes you just have to go out and compete and we are not doing that right now."

The Cougar offensive explosion was no surprise to Mauer.

"They had a game plan. They went right at (Kernels starter Brett) Lee and barreled him up and continued to barrel him up," Mauer said.

"He got behind some and got the ball up a little and they hit a few out. They got some young men over there who can hit, without a doubt."

The Cedar Rapids offense has struggled in the last two losses, scoring just single runs in each defeat. On top of that, the pitching staff has been stretched thin with no starter making it out of the fifth inning the past three games.

Mauer turned to reserve catcher Jhonatan Arias to pitch the ninth against Kane County and he allowed three runs. Arias' effort and willingness to take one for his teammates was not lost on Mauer.

"We had to go to our bullpen again early tonight," said the Kernels skipper. "You just can't keep going five or six innings every night out of your bullpen."

"Arias has pitched some in his career, but he hasn't pitched for quite awhile," continued Mauer. "He had to bear it unfortunately to get us through the game. He went out there and did his best."

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There is lot of pressure on Sunday starter Hudson Boyd to go out and eat up some innings as the Kernels attempt to end their losing streak in the 2 p.m. contest.

"We need Boyd to step up tomorrow," Mauer said. "We need him to go out there and compete. Hopefully that will give us the spark we really need right now."

KANE COUNTY (15): Amaya, 2b, 5 2 1 1, Almora, cf, 5 2 4 4, Vogelbach, 1b, 6 1 1 1, Candelario, 3b, 4 2 3 1, Shoulders, dh, 5 1 1 2, Contreras, c, 6 1 2 2, Zapata, lf, 4 2 2 2, Golden, rf, 4 2 2 0, Hernandez, ss, 3 2 2 2, Heesch, p, 0 0 0 0, Dickson, p, 0 0 0 0, Castillo, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 42 15 18 15.

KERNELS (1): Buxton, cf, 5 0 3 1, Williams, lf, 4 0 0 0, Polanco, ss, 4 0 0 0, Hicks, 1b, 4 0 0 0, Walker, rf, 4 0 0 0, Harrison, 3b, 4 0 0 0, Grimes, c, 4 1 3 0, Licon, 2b, 3 0 1 0, Pineda, dh, 3 0 1 0, Lee, p, 0 0 0 0, Merck, p, 0 0 0 0, Montanez, p, 0 0 0 0, Muren, p, 0 0 0 0, Arias, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 35 1 8 1.

Kane County 016 140 003 - 15 18 1
Kernels 000 000 100 - 1 8 1

Heesch, Dickson (7), Castillo (9) and Contreras. Lee, Merck (5), Montanez (7), Muren (8), Arias (9) and Grimes. W - Heesch (3-4). L - Lee (4-4). 2B - Contreras (5), Zapata (8), Hernandez (8), Shoulders (11). HR - Candelario (3), Amaya (2), Vogelbach (10), Almora (1). SF - Almora. E - Candelario (13), Harrison (12). T - 2:43. A - 5,251.