

Lizarraga shines as Cougars belt Wash

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 10 June 2013 22:35 - Last Updated Monday, 10 June 2013 22:43



The Junior Cougars brought out the best in Sammy Lizarraga and the Senior Cougars at Kennedy High School Monday night.

Lizarraga pitched a two-hit shutout, went 3-for-3 and drove in three runs as Kennedy belted Washington, 10-0, in five innings on Junior Cougar Night at the ballpark.

Brock Skow socked a two-run homer in the fourth inning and roped a two-run double in the fifth to finish the game by the mercy rule.

Kennedy has been struggling a little this season after suffering heavy graduation losses from a club that reached the semifinals of the Class 4A state tournament, but the Cougars (4-7, 3-5) looked sharp against the Warriors (7-5, 5-4).

It wasn't that long ago that Lizarraga, now a strapping 6-foot-4 sophomore, was marching on the field himself as a Junior Cougar. He enjoyed playing well Monday with more than 200 baby Cougars in the audience and had been looking forward to the opportunity.

"It was big. I was really excited," said Lizarraga. "I've been thinking about it for a good couple of days now."

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Lizarraga said he has fond memories from Junior Cougar Nights when he was one of those young kids parading on the field.

"Every year, having your name called and getting to raise your hat and everyone claps for you as a little kid. It was the best," he said.



"I was really excited tonight. I had the adrenaline going. I was ready. And I was facing a D-I athlete. It was just a lot of fun."

The Division I opponent was A.J. Puk, who will be leaving Cedar Rapids in about 10 days to become a college baseball player at the University of Florida. Lizarraga gave Puk a few pitches to hit, but ended up walking him both times.

"I was thinking, 'Stay away, stay away' and try not to give him anything easy to hit," said Lizarraga. "I ended up walking him twice, which I wasn't too disappointed in."

Puk played first base Monday night, but he's scheduled to pitch in the rematch against Kennedy Tuesday night at Washington.

Kennedy Coach Bret Hoyer gave Lizarraga a few opportunities to pitch for the varsity last year as a freshman. Now Lizarraga is one of the top pitchers on the club as the Cougars rebuild.

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"He was pretty good," said Hoyer. "He made some really tough pitches to some very good hitters. I'm very happy with him."

Lizarraga said it was his best all-around game for Kennedy.

"I was hitting my spots with my fastball and then I was working my changeup every now and then and really keeping them off-balance," he said.

Andrew Johnson went 3-for-3 for Kennedy and drove in two runs. The Cougars collected 12 hits in 4 1/3 innings in one of their best showings of the campaign.

Lizarraga thinks the future could be bright for Kennedy.

"The possibilities are endless right now," he said. "We're really young, and all we can do now is keep getting better. It can't really get worse from here. We're just going to get better and better."

The night was not as successful for Johnny Dobbs, another former Junior Cougar who just finished his freshman year at Washington High School. Dobbs was touched for eight runs in 3 2/3 innings.

WASHINGTON (0): Dostal, c, 3 0 1 0, Lombardi, ss, 3 0 0 0, Puk, 1b, 0 0 0 0, Burdt, rf, 2 0 0 0, Dobbs, p/3b, 1 0 1 0, Gillis, dh, 1 0 0 0, Nichols, 3b/2b, 2 0 0 0, Matsuda, pr, 0 0 0 0, Akers, lf, 2 0 0 0, Troendle, cf, 2 0 0 0, Loeffelholz, 2b, 0 0 0 0, Christensen, p, 0 0 0 0. Totals 16 0 2 0.

KENNEDY (10): Jacobus, cf/ss, 2 1 1 0, Matsudo, ph, 1 1 0 0, Skow, dh, 4 1 2 4, Staton, 1b, 3 2 1 0, Maiers, c, 1 3 1 0, Lizarraga, p, 3 0 3 3, Moa, cr, 0 1 0 0, Johnson, lf/cf, 3 0 3 2, Smetzer, 2b, 3 0 0 0, Moa, lf, 0 0 0 0, Stevens, rf, 2 0 0 0, Daniels, ss/2b, 3 1 1 0, Sass, 3b, 0 0 0 0.

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Totals 25 10 12 9.

Washington 000 00 - 0 2 3

Kennedy 201 52 - 10 12 1

Dobbs, Christensen (4) and Dostal. Lizarraga and Maiers. W - Lizarraga. L - Dobbs. 2B - Skow, Lizarraga. HR - Skow. SB - Johnson.