

Kernels squander Montanez's effort

Written by S.D. Buhr

Thursday, 25 July 2013 21:14 - Last Updated Thursday, 25 July 2013 21:24



Kernels starting pitcher Josue Montanez had been struggling lately, failing to survive five innings in two of his past three starts.

But Thursday night, the lefthander from Puerto Rico appeared to find his rhythm early, throwing seven innings for the first time this season.

Unfortunately, the Kernels wasted Montanez's effort, falling to the Peoria Chiefs 8-3 before a crowd of 3,085 at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

The Kernels offense failed to take advantage of scoring opportunities for the second night in a row.

On Wednesday, Kernels Manager Jake Mauer observed of Montanez, "He's had a couple of rough starts. He's got to figure it out."

One night later, it appeared Montanez had made strides in doing just that. "It's a shame, he had a nice start," Mauer commented after Thursday's loss.

It wasn't necessarily pretty.

Montanez spread out 10 hits over his seven innings, allowing five runs, striking out just one batter, but also walking only one. His night looked a lot better before Chiefs second baseman Jacob Wilson touched Montanez for a three-run home run on a no-balls, two-strikes count with two outs in the seventh.

"He was aggressive early," Mauer said of Montanez, "but he just laid an 0-2 hanging curveball in there and it got destroyed."

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"We'll have our nights when we'll score eight, nine runs, but we've got to have our nights when we only give up one or two," added Mauer.

Thursday was not one of those nights, however.

Dallas Gallant relieved Montanez to start the eighth inning and gave up three runs while recording just two outs. He walked three and gave up two hits in the process.

"We've got too many guys without an 'out pitch,'" Mauer lamented about his pitching staff. "You need something to finish somebody off, one time."

The Kernels' infield led the team at the plate. Second baseman Joel Licon doubled twice and added a pair of RBI, while shortstop Jorge Polanco and third baseman Travis Harrison each singled three times in five at-bats.

The Kernels struck first on the night when Polanco singled in Jeremias Pineda in the third inning. One of Licon's doubles ended the Kernels' scoring for the night in the fourth inning, driving in two runs.

The Kernels will try to avoid the series sweep at the hands of Peoria when the two teams meet again Friday night at 6:35. The Kernels will kick off their "Minnesota Twins Weekend" and Twins great Tony Oliva will be signing autographs for fans on the concourse until 6:10 p.m.

PEORIA (8): McElroy, cf, 5 1 3 3, Tilson, rf, 5 0 0 0, Wilson, 2b, 5 2 1 3, Schaffer, 1b, 5 0 0 0, Wisdom, 3b, 5 0 1 0, Valera, lf, 4 0 2 1, Vargas, ss, 4 2 1 0, Martin, dh, 4 2 3 0, Velazco, c, 2 1 1 1. Totals 39 8 12 8.

KERNELS (3): Murphy, cf, 5 0 1 0, Polanco, ss, 5 0 3 1, Gonzales, 1b, 4 0 1 0, Walker, rf, 5 0 0

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O, Kepler, lf, 4 1 1 0, Harrison, 3b, 5 1 3 0, Grimes, c, 4 0 0 0, Licon, 2b, 3 0 1 2, Pineda, dh, 3 1 2 0. Totals 38 3 12 3.

Peoria 000 020 321 - 8 12 0

Kernels 001 200 000 - 3 12 2

O'Shea, Scanio (7), Llorens (9) and Velazco. Montanez, Gallant (8), Muren (8) and Grimes. W-O'Shea (1-0). L-Montanez (4-3). 2B-Martin (2), Licon (6), Gonzales (2). HR-Wilson (15). S-Grimes. SB-Wilson (6), Valera (7), Pineda (11). E-Kepler (4), Harrison (20). T-2:46. A-3,085.