

Kernels have more trouble with River Bandits

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 23 August 2013 21:43 - Last Updated Friday, 23 August 2013 21:45



DAVENPORT - Nobody has given the Cedar Rapids Kernels more trouble this season than the Quad Cities River Bandits.

That's potentially bad news for the Kernels, because there's a good chance they'll meet the River Bandits when the Midwest League playoffs begin Sept. 4.

The River Bandits trimmed Cedar Rapids, 3-2, before 6,913 fans at Modern Woodmen Park Friday night to finish with a 10-and-6 record against the Kernels for the regular season.

The Kernels are hoping to win their first Midwest League title since 1994, but they might have to reverse their fortunes against Quad Cities to get it done.

"It will be a good matchup," said Cedar Rapids Manager Jake Mauer. "We'll have our hands full, no doubt about it. They don't beat themselves, and they make the plays. That's plain and simple."

The Kernels have a winning record against every team in the Western Division except the Bandits. They are 10-3 against Clinton, 10-4 against Kane County, 10-7 against Burlington, 10-8 against Beloit, 9-7 against Peoria and 8-2 against Wisconsin.

The Kernels have a 4-5 record against the River Bandits in Davenport and a 2-5 mark against them in Cedar Rapids. There are 11 games left in the regular season and the playoff pairings have not been determined, but it looks like the Kernels and Bandits could begin an opening round best-of-3 series in Davenport Sept. 4 before moving to Cedar Rapids Sept. 5 and 6 (if necessary).

The Kernels played Friday night without their all-star double play combination of shortstop Niko Goodrum and second baseman Jorge Polanco, both currently on the 7-day disabled list. Mauer

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anticipates Polanco returning in three or four days, and he anticipates Goodrum returning Aug. 29 when he's eligible to come off the DL.

"I'd like to get both of them back, if we could (before the playoffs)," said Mauer. "Just to get a few games under their belt, get them moving around, get them some at-bats and then go into the playoffs. It would be nice to get those guys back and healthy."

Goodrum and Polanco both have strained groin muscles.

The Kernels got a quality start from Hudson Boyd, who allowed three earned runs in seven innings. Boyd (4-5) struck out four batters, walked two and was touched for only four hits.

A couple of botched force plays on defense came back to haunt the Kernels. Instead of getting an out at second base on infield grounders, the Kernels bobbled the ball and got an out at first base instead. That put runners in scoring position, and the clutch River Bandits took advantage both times with two-out RBI singles to center field.

The bobbles were not errors, because the Kernels recorded an out on both plays, but they hurt just the same.

"Little things," mused Mauer. "If we make plays, we win 2-to-1."

Ryan Walker, who joined the Kernels Friday from Elizabethton in the Appalachian League, played a flawless game at shortstop and went 1-for-3. Tyler Grimes, normally a catcher, played second base and had one of the bobbles that led to a run. Mike Gonzales played first base and had the other costly bobble.

Adam Brett Walker went 3-for-4 for Cedar Rapids, raising his average to .284.

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The Kernels open a seven-game homestand Saturday night against Peoria at 6:35. It will be the final homestand of the regular season.

"It will be nice to get home and get in front of our fans and try to get some of that energy and get back to playing the way we can," said Mauer.

The Kernels finished 5-and-2 on their road trip, but lost the final two games in Davenport.

KERNELS (2): Murphy, cf, 4 1 1 0, Licon, 3b, 4 0 1 0, Kepler, lf, 4 0 0 1, A.Walker, rf, 4 1 3 0, Gonzales, 1b, 4 0 0 0, Altobelli, c, 4 0 1 1, Grimes, 2b, 3 0 0 0, Harrison, ph, 1 0 0 0, R.Walker, ss, 3 0 1 0, Pineda, dh, 3 0 1 0. Totals 34 2 8 2.

QUAD CITIES (3): Kemp, dh, 4 0 1 1, Hernandez, cf, 4 1 2 0, Correa, ss, 3 0 0 0, Vasquez, lf, 4 0 1 1, Borchering, 1b, 3 0 0 0, Ruiz, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Elkins, 2b, 2 1 0 0, Morales, c, 2 1 0 0, Scott, rf, 3 0 1 1. Totals 28 3 5 3.

Kernels 010 001 000 - 2 8 2
Quad Cities 001 001 10x - 3 5 2

Boyd, Gilbert (8) and Altobelli. Bircher, Walter (6) and Morales. W - Walter (1-0). L - Boyd (4-5). 3B - Murphy (3). E - Altobelli (1), Murphy (4), Borchering (7), Elkins (13). T - 2:14. A - 6,913.