

Wade's homer helps Kernels have good day

Written by Jim Ecker

Sunday, 06 April 2014 20:13 - Last Updated Monday, 07 April 2014 07:58



Logan Wade has liked everything about playing for the Minnesota Twins organization since he arrived from Australia two years ago, but Thursday night's Kernels' opener in the bitter cold and rain in Cedar Rapids was an exception.

The 22-year-old infielder had trouble gripping the baseball and made three throwing errors that night as he struggled to keep warm.

"The coldest I'd played in before was probably 65 degrees," Wade said Sunday. "Yeah, opening night was a bit of a chill for me.

"After that night I went out and bought some hand-warmers and extra clothing. I'm trying to make an adjustment and realize what the cold does to you when you're playing baseball."

He enjoyed Sunday's weather in Cedar Rapids a lot better, even though it was only 55 and cloudy.

Wade celebrated the extra warmth by hitting a home run in the seventh inning to snap a 2-2 tie and help the Kernels trim Clinton, 4-2, before 1,019 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium in Cedar Rapids.

Cedar Rapids split the four-game series against the LumberKings to begin the Midwest League campaign and now hits the road for a three-game series at Great Lakes that begins Tuesday and another three-game set at Lansing before returning home next Monday night, April 14.

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Kohl Stewart, the No.4 overall pick in the 2013 draft, allowed two runs on two hits in five innings and got a no-decision for the Kernels. He flashed a mid-90s fastball and called it a day after throwing 64 pitches.

Wade went 2-for-4 and is hitting a respectable .273 so far now that he's defrosted. He looked like a mummy on the field Thursday night with a hood over his Kernels cap and flaps that covered most of his face.



"I started off the first five innings without it on. I couldn't take it," he said. "It was getting late in the game and I could not take it anymore. I had to keep the ears and the nose and the mouth warm."

Wade has not made any more errors since Thursday and showed a strong, accurate arm Sunday at second base. He began the season at third base on Thursday.

Baseball was not Wade's primary sport in Australia, but he's always enjoyed the game.

"Playing baseball in Australia, it's not the biggest sport over there," he related. "I was playing rugby in the rugby union and baseball in the offseason. I had to make a choice of what I wanted to play. Baseball was in my heart, so I followed it."

Wade said most Major League teams send scouts to Australia, searching for talent. "I was

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playing in a regional tournament, and a Twins scout approached me and offered me to come over and play," he explained.

He signed as a non-drafted free agent and hit a modest .234 in the Gulf Coast League in 2012. Things improved in 2013 when he led Elizabethton in hitting with a .303 average in the Appalachian League, earning him a promotion to Cedar Rapids this year. So far, he's followed the normal path for a minor league player in the Twins organization.

"Yup. I've gone up each year," he noted. "And that's my goal, to get better every year. I've gone along steadily and I'm loving every minute of it."

Stewart, 19, is the \$4.5 million bonus baby who signed with the Twins last summer instead of going to Texas A&M to play football and baseball. He was touched for two runs and two hits in the first inning, but tossed four hitless innings after that. He struck out two batters and walked one.

"I felt good. I pounded the zone," he said. "I went right after hitters. A couple of pitches got away from me. My curveball wasn't really there today. The changeup was all right."

Stewart's parents flew in from Houston for the game. "They flew in for the weekend," he said. "They wanted to see it, so they came in."

Cedar Rapids native Chad Christensen played left field and went 1-for-4. It was his first hit for the Kernels.

Yorman Landa pitched two innings and collected the win for the Kernels. Josue Montanez tossed one inning for a hold, and Hudson Boyd pitched the ninth inning for a save.

Designated hitter Mitch Garver hit a home run for the Kernels in the second inning to tie the game, 2-2.

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CLINTON (2): Barbosa, cf, 3 0 0 0, Littlewood, c, 4 1 2 0, Reinheimer, ss, 3 1 1 1, Wilson, rf, 4 0 0 1, O'Neill, lf, 4 0 0 0, DeCarlo, 3b, 4 0 1 0, Zimmerman, dh, 2 0 0 0, Seager, 1b, 3 0 0 0, Peguero, 2b, 3 0 1 0. Totals 30 2 5 2.

KERNELS (4): Granite, cf, 5 0 2 0, Licon, 3b, 2 1 0 0, Larson, rf, 4 0 0 0, Haar, 1b, 4 0 1 1, Quesada, c, 4 0 1 0, Garver, dh, 2 1 2 1, Pineda, pr/dh, 0 1 0 0, Christensen, lf, 4 0 1 0, Wade, 2b, 4 1 2 1, Vielma, ss, 4 0 1 1. Totals 33 4 10 4.

Clinton 200 000 000 - 2 5 0

Kernels 110 000 11x - 4 10 1

Zokan, Holovach (6), Pineda (7) and Littlewood. Stewart, Landa (6), Montanez (8), Boyd (9) and Quesada. W - Landa (1-0). L - Holovach (0-1). S - Boyd (1). 2B - DeCarlo, Haar, Quesada. 3B - Reinheimer. HR - Garver, Wade. E - Montanez. A - 1,019.