

Mauer not happy as Kernels fall, 5-2

Written by S.D. Buhr

Wednesday, 09 July 2014 22:14 -



Cedar Rapids Kernels starting pitcher Ryan Eades struck out nine hitters in his five innings on the mound Wednesday night and the bullpen added four more whiffs.

Normally, that should be enough pitching to get a win, but a lack of timely hitting and some faulty defense by the home team allowed the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers to top the Kernels, 5-2, in front of 1,597 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

Kernels Manager Jake Mauer was succinct in his post-game analysis.

“We didn’t catch the ball,” Mauer said. “We don’t catch the ball, we’re not gonna win.”

“The third baseman kicks two. Ball dribbles past our first baseman, doesn’t even move for it. Center fielder dives for a ball he’s got no chance at. Very disappointing.”

It has been a familiar pattern for the Kernels through much of the season.

“We don’t get a big hit, we don’t make a defensive play. We don’t do the things we need to do to win games,” said Mauer.

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Kernels hitters stranded eight runners in scoring position, with just two hits in 10 opportunities with runners at second base or third base.

The manager is looking for someone to step up and lead the team between the lines. He isn't seeing that happen and expects some changes in the not-too-distant future.

"We've got nobody who's going to say, 'You know what, that's it, I'm carrying this team, I'm not gonna let this guy get on base.'

"We've got some guys getting healthy, so we're going to have some changes. Things will pick up. Things will look a lot different in August."

One change that could be forthcoming is the return of outfielder Zack Larson. Mauer said Larson, who was hitting .292 when he went on the Disabled List with a strained hamstring in May, played his first rehab game with the Gulf Coast League Twins Wednesday.

Eades' nine strikeouts were a season best for Kernels pitchers, but after a strong start, the right-hander gave up three runs in the Wisconsin half of the fourth inning and was charged with two more in the sixth.

Eades struck out the side in the fourth inning, but not before giving up a three-run, inside-the-park home run to Rattler shortstop Angel Ortega.

Jason Kanzler made a diving attempt at Ortega's two-out line drive to center field, but came up well short and the ball rolled to the wall near the deepest part of the ballpark.

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Eades' night was over after hitting a batter and giving up his first walk of the evening to start the sixth inning. Both Rattlers would come around to score.

Chris Mazza relieved Eades and added two strikeouts in two innings on the hill. Jared Wilson relieved Mazza and finished the game for Cedar Rapids with two innings of shutout work, striking out two in the process.

Chad Christensen had three hits for the Kernels. He scored the club's first run in the sixth and drove in the second run with his third single in the seventh inning.

Mitch Garver added a pair of hits for Cedar Rapids.

The same two teams will complete their three-game series with a rubber match at 6:35 Thursday. Chih-Wei Hu, newly arrived from Elizabethton, will make his first start for the Kernels.

WISCONSIN (5): Davis, cf, 5 0 1 0, McFarland, 2b, 4 0 1 0, Ratterree, rf, 4 0 1 0, Coulter, dh, 4 0 0 0, DeMuth, 3b, 3 2 1 0, Brennan, 1b, 3 1 0 0, Neda, c, 4 1 2 0, Pena, lf, 3 0 1 1, Ortega, ss, 4 1 1 4. Totals 34 5 8 5.

KERNELS (2): Murphy, rf, 4 0 1 0, Walker, ss, 5 0 2 0, Christensen, 1b, 5 1 3 1, Garver, c, 4 0 2 0, Haar, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Swim, dh, 4 0 1 1, Kanzler, cf, 3 0 0 0, Williams, lf, 4 0 1 0, Vavra, 2b, 3 1 0 0. Totals 35 2 10 2.

Wisconsin 000 302 000 - 5 8 1

Kernels 000 001 100 - 2 10 1

Terry, Curtis (6), Astin (8) and Neda. Eades, Mazza (6), Wilson (8) and Garver. W - Terry (2-2).

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L - Eades (5-9). S - Astin (2). HR - Ortega (3).

SB - Davis (23), DeMuth (1), Murphy (3). E - DeMuth (2), Haar (15). T - 3:05. A - 1,597.