

Slegers twirls victory for Kernels

Written by Morgan Hawk
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CLINTON - Aaron Slegers was brilliant Saturday night, sending the Cedar Rapids Kernels to a 5-1 victory over the Clinton LumberKings before 1,237 fans at Ashford University Field in Clinton.

The Kernels raised their record to 41-51 with their fourth straight victory.

Slegers went all seven innings in the rain-shortened game. The contest was also delayed 44 minutes at the start of the night, but it was worth the wait for the Kernels.

Slegers (6-6) allowed just two hits and one run. He struck out seven and walked one, letting just three LumberKings reach base.

He struck out all three batters he faced in the first inning, but Clinton's Justin Seager hit a solo home run to lead off the bottom of the second inning. Seager's second homer of the season went to left field and put the LumberKings up 1-0. Slegers retired the next 12 batters in a row before allowing his first walk and second baserunner, a leadoff base on balls to Luis Caballero in the sixth inning.

Slegers did not allow his second hit until the seventh inning. Jack Reinheimer singled to right-center to begin the final inning, but was left stranded at third base after two groundouts and a strikeout.

The Kernels took a 2-1 lead in the third inning. The team loaded the bases with a Michael Quesada bloop single, Jon Murphy's walk and a bunt single by Ryan Walker.

Quesada scored the first run for the Kernels when Logan Wade reached on a fielding error by second baseman Reinheimer. Murphy came home on Chad Christensen's sacrifice fly to center, putting the Kernels in front.

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Jason Kanzler gave the Kernels a 4-1 lead in the fourth inning with a two-run home run to right field. Kanzler's opposite-field homer was his eighth of the season and scored Alex Swim, who singled to begin the inning.

The Kernels took a 5-1 lead in the sixth inning on Quesada's RBI single to center field. It scored Swim, who again sparked a run-scoring inning when he doubled down the left-field line.

Jose Flores (2-1) suffered his first loss of the season for Clinton.

Walker, Mitch Garver, Swim and Quesasa had two hits for Cedar Rapids.

The Kernels and LumberKings continue the series Sunday at 2 p.m. A pair of left-handers square off as Lewis Thorpe (1-1, 5.40) gets the ball for the Kernels and Eddie Campbell (5-6, 6.01) takes the hill for Clinton.