

## Mauer sits as Kernels fall to Wisconsin

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 04 August 2014 21:57 -

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Cedar Rapids Kernels Manager Jake Mauer had a former American League MVP and six-time all-star on his bench in the ninth inning of a tight ballgame Monday night, but there was no way he was going to use his younger brother in that situation.

Joe Mauer stayed on the bench as the Kernels lost to Wisconsin, 4-3, before 1,902 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

Joe Mauer practiced with the Kernels Monday afternoon and took batting practice, but the Minnesota Twins did not want him to play until Tuesday night as he rehabs from a strained oblique muscle.

Using the Minnesota star as a pinch-hitter in the bottom of the ninth was a tempting thought, especially in the midst of a pennant race, but orders are orders.

"It would have been nice, wouldn't it?" Jake Mauer said, smiling at the thought at sending his brother up to hit. "It would be like high school. Use him to pitch AND hit.

"No, it wouldn't be fair to him and to the organization," Mauer said. "I might not have a job if he goes out there and something happens."

Joe Mauer is scheduled to play in Tuesday night's game against Wisconsin as the designated hitter, then start at first base Wednesday night. He's scheduled for an off-day on Thursday, so he probably will not play that night, but it's possible he'll play for the Kernels this weekend against Kane County as part of his rehab assignment.

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Chad Christensen probably will move from first base to the outfield to make room for Mauer in the lineup Wednesday night, according to Jake Mauer. Christensen has played 67 games at first base, but also has appeared 34 times in the outfield and is one of the Kernels' top outfielders.

Christensen belted a solo home run in the sixth inning Monday to tie the game, 3-3, and has been one of the team's most productive players all year. Jake Mauer wants to keep Christensen in the lineup and give his brother a chance to play at the same time.

Christensen is a team-first guy and will do whatever he can to help.

"We have to get him back to the big leagues," said Christensen, who hit his first home run in six weeks. "Obviously he'll be in there at first (base). Wherever I play, it will be fun to have him in the lineup with us."

Christensen and Mauer worked out at first base in the pre-game drills Monday. Christensen and Mauer have something in common, having become regular first basemen for the first time in their careers this season.

Christensen had a chance to talk with the Twins star, who until this year was a catcher.

"We were just talking first-base stuff, because he's moved there as well," Christensen said. "I kind of watched him. And I wanted to ask him a couple of things about the big leagues."

"It's pretty exciting to have him in town for a few days. It's going to be a lot of fun. It's something you never really expect to have in A-Ball to play with someone like Joe Mauer."

Wisconsin scored the winning run against Kernels relief pitcher Dallas Gallant in the ninth inning

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on a single, double and sacrifice fly to shallow right field. Cedar Rapids right fielder Alex Swim might have gotten the runner at home plate with a good throw, but the throw was wide of the plate and Johnny Davis scored easily.

Gallant (1-1) had not given up an earned run all season in 13 games and 16.2 innings, but the streak ended and cost the Kernels a ballgame.

The Kernels dropped a half-game behind Kane County for first place in the Western Division standings. Kane County's game Monday night was suspended.

The Kernels are a half-game ahead of Wisconsin in the standings as the race continues for playoff spots.

Cedar Rapids and Wisconsin meet again Tuesday night at 6:35. Minnesota Twins pitcher Ricky Nolasco, also here on a rehab assignment, is scheduled to start for the Kernels.

WISCONSIN (4): Brennan, 3b, 4 0 0 0, McFarland, 2b, 3 2 2 0, Ratterree, rf, 3 1 1 2, Coulter, dh, 4 0 0 0, Garcia, lf, 3 0 0 0, Denson, 1b, 3 0 0 0, Neda, c, 4 0 0 0, Davis, cf, 4 1 1 0, Ortega, ss, 4 0 2 0. Totals 32 4 6 2.

KERNELS (3): Walker, 2b, 4 0 0 0, Wade, 3b, 4 0 0 0, Christensen, 1b, 3 2 1 1, Garver, c, 3 1 0 0, Swim, dh, 4 0 1 1, M.Murphy, cf, 2 0 1 0, Williams, lf, 4 0 0 0, Vielma, ss, 3 0 1 0, Haar, ph, 1 0 0 0, J.Murphy, rf, 3 0 0 0. Totals 31 3 4 2.

Wisconsin 000 210 001 - 4 6 0

Kernels 000 201 000 - 3 4 2

Quintana, Curtis (5), Archer (8) and Neda. Thorpe, Wilson (5), Mazza (7), Gallant (9) and Garver. W - Archer (5-5). L - Gallant (1-1). 2B - Ortega (15). HR - Christensen (8). E - Christensen (6), Wilson (2). T - 3:13. A - 1,902.

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