

Jake ejected, Joe stars, Kernels lose

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 08 August 2014 23:08 - Last Updated Friday, 08 August 2014 23:17



The Cedar Rapids Kernels did not charge nearly enough money for tickets to Friday night's game at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

Jake Mauer got ejected and gave the umpires an earful before he left and his brother Joe got three hits and helped ignite a big rally in the ninth inning.

There were post-game fireworks for the 5,307 fans to enjoy as well, a regular staple at Friday night home games.

The only thing that was missing was a dramatic come-from-behind victory, and the Kernels came darn close to supplying that as well.

Cedar Rapids rallied for three runs in the bottom of the ninth but fell a run shy against Kane County, 6-5, in a battle for first place in the Western Division of the Midwest League.

Jake Mauer got agitated in the second inning because he thought Kane County pitcher Jonathan Martinez was repeatedly balking from the stretch position, but the two umpires did not see it that way. Field umpire Adrian Gonzalez gave the Kernels skipper a quick heave-ho.

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"To me it was pretty apparent," said Mauer. "There wasn't any gray area with it. It wasn't just once, it was several times."

Mauer claimed Martinez was not pausing in his delivery, was double-setting and breaking his hands, all violations of the balk rules in his view.

"I don't know what they (the umps) were looking at, but it was pretty apparent what he was doing," said Mauer. "Maybe it's a different balk in my rulebook from what they're looking at."

Mauer yelled at plate umpire Tyler Olson on his way to the dugout after being ejected by Gonzalez, then watched the game on closed-circuit TV in his office.

"I watched the kid continue to balk even when I got thrown out," he said.

Mauer said he plans to complain to Midwest League officials. The league office is located in Beloit, Wis., and the Kernels play a series there next week.

"When we go up to Beloit I'm going to bring tape of the game and I'm going to show it to the president," he said.



Kernels players were yelling at the umpires from the dugout about the alleged balks, which is one reason Mauer took his beef onto the field from the third-base coaching box. He felt it was better for him to get ejected than one of the players.

"He (Gonzalez) started hollering at our dugout," said Mauer. "We can't have one of the guys get

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tossed. We can't have that. Obviously it would impact the game."

Kernels batting coach Tommy Watkins took Mauer's spot in the third-base coaching box and ran the club in his absence.

By coincidence, Joe Mauer was the batter in the second inning when his brother got tossed from the game. Martinez had thrown a couple of inside pitches to Mauer in the first inning and second inning and brushed him off the plate, but that had nothing to do with Jake Mauer's complaints.

"I'm proud of him for protecting his guys. That's what managers do," said Joe Mauer, a Minnesota Twins all-star who has spent this week with the Kernels on a rehab assignment. "It's better to have the manager go than one of those guys."

Joe Mauer had a little fun with his brother before stepping into the interview room after the game. He asked Jake, "Hey, have two brothers ever been thrown out of the same game?"

Mauer played all nine innings at first base for the Kernels and went 3-for-5. That makes him 4-for-11 on his rehab assignment for a nifty .364 average.

He fielded a couple of ground balls, snared a line drive, scored all the way from first base on a double by Mitch Garver in the ninth inning, slid into second base on a force play and did all the things he'll need to do in a Major League game.

"I felt good tonight," he said. "It's nice to have results, but I'm starting to feel closer and closer. Tonight was definitely better than the last two days."

Mauer had a scare in the ninth inning when he was in the on-deck area waiting for his turn to bat. Chad Christensen lined a foul ball that whizzed right by Mauer, who had no time to react.

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"That ball about gave me a heart attack right there," he said.

Mauer plans to play for the Kernels Saturday night and Sunday afternoon. He's not sure when he'll rejoin the Twins, but feels he's getting closer.

"It's all going in the right direction," he said.

The Kernels trailed, 6-2, entering the bottom of the ninth before staging their big rally. Mauer had an RBI single to make it 6-3, then Garver lined a double into the right-field corner to make it 6-5 as Engelb Vielma and Mauer raced home.

Kane County changed pitchers, but the new guy walked Bryan Haar to put runners at first and second. Alex Swim struck out for the second out, but Max Murphy was hit by a pitch to load the bases and bring Logan Wade to the plate.

Wade struck out to end the game, leaving the bases loaded.

The loss dropped the Kernels (27-20) one game behind Kane County (28-19) in the Midwest League standings with 23 games left in the regular season. The Kernels and Cougars meet again Saturday and Sunday.

The Kernels could use Mauer's bat in the lineup for the rest of the season, but in all likelihood he'll depart after Sunday's game.

"The big club could use me, too," he said.

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The crowd of 5,307 was the second-largest of the season, drawn to the ballpark by Joe Mauer, the fireworks and the pennant race.

"It's fun to be a part of that," said Mauer. "These guys are excited. You can't simulate the intensity and the adrenaline that you get in these games.

"It was good to see the fight in the guys," he said. "We'll come back tomorrow and try to get one."

Jake Mauer said Thursday night that Zack Granite would be activated from the disabled list Friday and join the Kernels, but Granite apparently had a setback in his rehab process and has not joined the club.

KANE COUNTY (6): Dunston, lf, 5 1 2 0, Young, 2b, 5 1 2 0, Caratini, dh, 4 2 1 0, Rogers, 1b, 4 1 2 3, Brockmeyer, c, 4 1 3 1, Cadelario, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Lockhart, ss, 4 0 2 2, Baez, cf, 4 0 0 0, Brown, rf, 4 0 0 0. Totals 37 6 12 6

KERNELS (5): Vielma, ss, 4 1 2 0, Christensen, lf, 4 0 0 1, Mauer, 1b, 5 1 3 1, Garver, dh, 5 0 1 1, Walker, pr/dh, 0 0 0 0, Haar, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Swim, rf, 5 0 2 0, Murphy, cf, 4 1 2 0, Wade, 2b, 5 1 1 0, Quesada, c, 3 1 1 1. Totals 38 5 12 4.

Kane County 300 002 010 - 6 12 2

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Kernels 020 000 003 - 5 12 1

Martinez, Wagner (4), Heesch (8), Carrillo (9) and Brockmeyer. Gonsalves, Mazza (5), Boyd (7), Montanez (9) and Quesada. W - Wagner (3-2). L - Gonsalves (1-2). S - Carrillo (1). 2B - Rogers (22), Lockhart 2 (16), Murphy (3), Swim (8), Garver (22). SB - Dunston (19). E - Young (1), Brown (1), Swim (2). T - 3:26. A - 5,307.