

## Burdi gets a save and his jersey (for \$500)

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 09 August 2014 21:02 - Last Updated Saturday, 09 August 2014 21:17

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Cedar Rapids pitcher Nick Burdi wanted a souvenir of his summer with the Kernels, so he asked his girlfriend to bid on the special Hawaiian jersey he wore during Saturday night's game at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

It reportedly cost \$500 for his girlfriend to submit the winning bid during the silent auction, but Burdi figured it was worth it.

The 6-foot-5 flamethrower collected his fourth save by tossing a scoreless ninth inning as the Kernels trimmed Kane County, 3-2, before a season-high crowd of 5,570 fans on Jimmy Buffett Night and Hawaiian Jersey Night at the ballpark.

Burdi got the save and the shirt.

"Yeah, I don't think it was cheap," he said, smiling. "I wanted at least one Kernels jersey before I left."

The Minnesota Twins gave Burdi a \$1.2 signing bonus this June after plucking him in the second round of the 2014 draft, so he can probably afford it.

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It might be a good thing Burdi did not ask his girlfriend, Rebecca Maddock, to bid on the jersey that Joe Mauer wore Saturday. That article of clothing reportedly went for \$1,000.

Mauer came here to get healthy and get his timing back before rejoining the Twins from an injury rehab assignment. The \$1,000 was a bonus for the Kernels Foundation, which will use proceeds from the auction for its charitable activities in the community.

"I'm glad to raise some money," said Mauer.

Burdi had a rather inauspicious pro debut with the Kernels in June when he walked all four batters he faced and all four scored, costing Cedar Rapids a ballgame. Since then, however, he's been extremely effective.

Burdi, blessed with a 100 mph fastball and nasty slider, has struck out 26 batters in his last 13 innings with only four walks. He has allowed just two earned runs during those 13 innings and at point he collected 10 straight outs with a strikeout.

"He's got a great arm," said Mauer, who played all nine innings at first base Saturday. "I imagine I'll probably see him pretty soon (with the Twins)."

Burdi has become a key member of the Kernels' bullpen, which has been a big factor in their surge in the Midwest League standings. The Kernels climbed back into a tie with Kane County and Wisconsin for first place in the Western Division standings with 28-20 records for the second half of the season.

Manager Jake Mauer has used several relief pitchers as closers because the Twins want to develop as many closers as possible, and Burdi has slipped comfortably into the role he performed so well at the University of Louisville.

"It's always nice, having a role with the team and knowing if it's a close game they're going to

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flip you the ball with the game on the line," he said. "That's always been my thing.



"You're going to win with the ball in your hand and you're going to lose with the ball in your hand. So I kind of take that mentality onto the field."

The Kernels took a 1-0 lead in the fourth inning on a solo home run by Logan Wade. Kane County tied the game, 1-1, with an unearned run against Lewis Thorpe in the fifth inning on a double and Thorpe's throwing error on a sacrifice bunt.

Thorpe (3-2, 4.02 ERA) pitched six strong innings, allowing just three hits and the one unearned run. He struck out seven batters, walked two and got the victory.

The Kernels took a 3-1 lead in the sixth inning on a two-run homer by Max Murphy. Kane County made it 3-2 in the seventh on a triple and double-steal, but the Cedar Rapids bullpen shut the door after that.

Murphy is riding an 11-game hitting streak and has reached base in all 12 of his games with Cedar Rapids.

Mauer went 2-for-4 for Cedar Rapids, raising his batting average in four games to .400 (6 for 15). It appears he'll play his final game for the Kernels Sunday at 2:05 p.m. against Kane County, but he said no final decisions have been made.

"I guess we'll see what happens in the morning," he said.

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Mauer said he's been satisfied with his progress in Cedar Rapids. He's been on the disabled list since July 2 with a strained oblique muscle.

He's been practicing and playing with the Kernels, along with doing extra work in the weight room and training room to get healthy.

"I was pretty sore this morning, but that's to be expected," he said. "I got out there and played and it was a good day.

"It doesn't sound like a whole lot, but when you've been out for awhile, getting back into it and playing back-to-back days is a little difficult. But that's why I'm down here and I'm glad these last two days went well.

"I've been working pretty hard and I'm happy where I'm at right now," he said. "I'm getting closer. I hit a couple of balls hard today. That's always nice. I think every day I feel a little bit better at the plate.

"It's just going to take time," he said. "If I go back (to the Twins) next week or whatever, it's probably going to take a little more time, too. But health-wise I'm feeling pretty good."

Minnesota Twins pitcher Ricky Nolasco, who has spent the week in Cedar Rapids on an injury rehab assignment, is scheduled to start for the Kernels against Kane County Sunday.

KANE COUNTY (2): Dunston, lf, 4 0 0 0, Young, 3b, 4 0 0 0, Carhart, c, 3 0 0 0, Brockmeyer, dh, 3 0 1 0, Rogers, 1b, 4 0 0 0, Baez, rf, 4 1 2 0, Lockhart, 2b, 3 1 1 0, Penalver, ss, 3 0 1 0, Martin, cf, 2 0 0 0. Totals 30 2 5 0.

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KERNELS (3): Christensen, lf, 4 0 1 0, Wade, 2b, 4 1 2 1, Mauer, 1b, 4 0 2 0, Garver, c, 3 0 0 0, Haar, 3b, 3 0 0 0, Swim, rf, 4 1 2 0, Murphy, cf, 4 1 1 2, Williams, dh, 4 0 0 0, Walker, ss, 2 0 0 0. Totals 32 3 8 3.

Kane County 000 010 100 - 2 5 0

Kernels 000 120 00x - 3 8 1

Ihrig, Garner (7), Rakkar (8) and Carhart. Thorpe, Gallant (7), Burdi (9) and Garver. W - Thorpe (3-2). L - Ihrig (1-1). S - Burdi (4). 2B - Baez (6). 3B - Lockart (1). HR - Wade (6), Murphy (2). E - Thorpe (3). T - 2:35. A - 5,570.