Kane County KO's Kernels from playoffs

Written by S.D. Buhr Sunday, 07 September 2014 20:37 -



GENEVA, III. - John Curtiss faced a lot of high-pressure situations on the mound during his days as the closer for the Texas Longhorns, but he never faced a situation as unique as what he faced Sunday night in Geneva, III.

Curtiss made his Midwest League debut Sunday after being called up to join the Kernels on Saturday.

He threw five shutout innings for Cedar Rapids, but it wasn't enough to keep the Kernels' season going as they fell, 4-2, to the Kane County Cougars in a back-and-forth ballgame before 1,239 fans at Fifth Third Bank Ballpark.

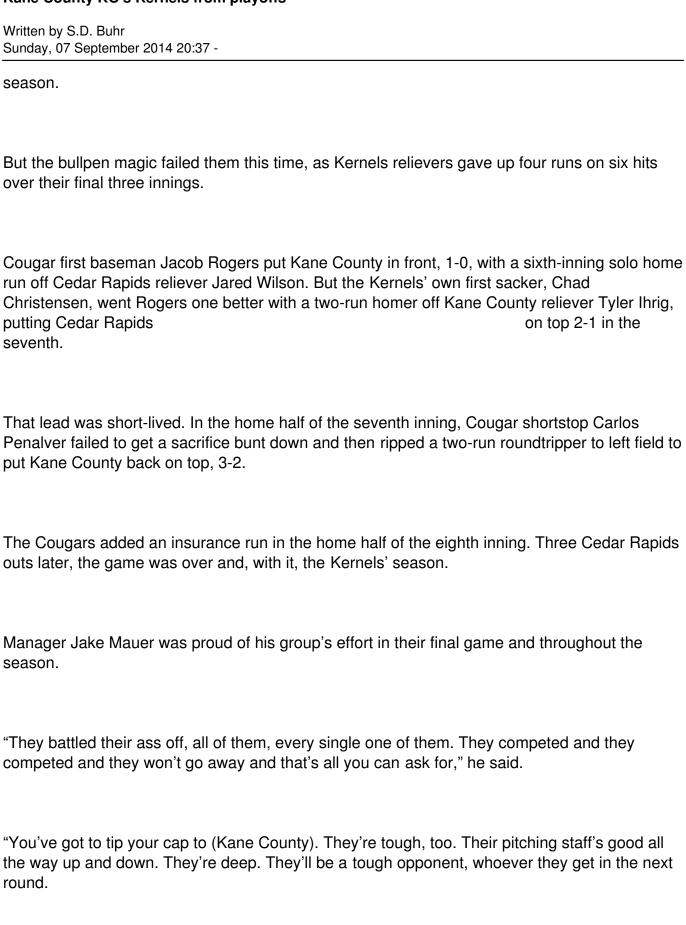
Curtiss spent his spring with the Longhorns and his summer in Elizabethton with the Twins' rookie level team in the Appalachian League after Minnesota made him its sixth-round pick in the June draft. But with the Kernels' starting pitching corps running thin, Curtiss got the word he needed to board a plane to Cedar Rapids on Saturday morning and by Sunday night he was starting a game the Kernels needed to win to keep their playoff hopes alive.

All Curtiss did was throw five innings of one-hit baseball at the team with the Midwest League's best record. He did not give up a hit until the fifth inning, though he did walk a pair and gave up a couple of warning-track sized fly balls.

The Kernels, likewise, had little luck hitting against Cougars starter Paul Blackburn. Blackburn held the Kernels scoreless through five innings and gave up just a third-inning single to Ryan Walker.

After both starting pitchers put up nothing but zeroes through five innings, the game came down to a battle of bullpens. Through most of this season, you would have liked the Kernels' chances in that situation. Their bullpen has been one of the best in the league for the second half of the

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"We beat ourselves a little bit (Saturday) night, not making the plays, but tonight we hit the ball over the fence," said Mauer. "They hit two and we hit one of them and that's just kind of how it

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goes."

Kane County won the Western Division title and will play for the Midwest League championship.

KERNELS (2): English, cf, 4 0 0 0, Hinojosa, 3b, 4 1 1 0, Chrisensen, 1b, 4 1 1 2, Murphy, lf, 4 0 1 0, Swim, rf, 3 0 0 0, Wade, dh, 3 0 0 0, Walker, 2b, 3 0 1 0, Quesada, c, 3 0 0 0, Vielma, ss, 3 0 0 0. Totals 31 2 4 2.

KANE COUNTY (4): Dunston, If, 4 0 0 0, Zaguins, dh, 4 0 1 0, Candelario, 3b, 1 0 0 0, Rogers, 1b, 4 1 1 1, Brockmeyer, c, 4 0 0 0, Baez, rf, 3 1 1 0, Young, 2b, 3 1 1 1, Penalver, ss, 4 1 3 2, Martin, cf, 4 0 0 0. Totals 31 4 7 4.

Kernels 000 000 200 - 2 4 1 Kane County 000 001 21x - 4 7 1

Curtiss, Wilson (6), Gilbert (7) and Quesada. Blackburn, Ihrig (6), Carrillo (9) and Brockmeyer. W - Ihrig (1-0). L - Wilson (1-1). S - Carrillo (2). 2B - Murphy (3). HR - Christensen (2), Rogers (1), Penalver (1). SB - Baez 2 (2). E - Hinojosa (3), Penalver (2). T - 2:23. A - 1,239.