

Kernels fall short at Kane County

Written by Jared Shlensky

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GENEVA, Ill. - The Kane County Cougars overcame a three-run deficit to claim the rubber game of their three-game series with the Cedar Rapids Kernels, 5-4, Sunday afternoon before 6,338 fans at Fifth Third Bank Ballpark.

Cedar Rapids (62-45) took the opening lead for the fourth straight game with three runs in the top of the second. Zack Larson was hit in the shoulder to start the inning. Brett Doe singled to left-center, giving the Kernels runners on the corners.

Tyler Kuresa drove in the Kernels' first run with an RBI single to left field, plating Larson from third. Alex Real followed Kuresa with an RBI fielder's choice, bringing in Doe from third.

Back-to-back singles by Brian Navarreto and Austin Diemer loaded the bases full of Kernels. Rafael Valera extended the Cedar Rapids lead to 3-0 with an RBI fielder's choice, scoring Real.

Kane County (64-41) cut the Cedar Rapids lead to 3-1 with a two-out run in the bottom of the fifth. The Cougars went in front of the Kernels, 5-3, with four runs in the bottom of the seventh.

Edgar Corcino made it a 5-4 contest with a solo home run to center in the top of the eighth for Cedar Rapids. The homer for Corcino was his third of the season. Randy LeBlanc (7-4) suffered the loss. The right-hander allowed five runs on nine hits and struck out three in 3 2/3 innings of relief.

Kernels starter Luke Westphal recorded a no-decision. The southpaw yielded two hits and a walk while striking out three in three innings. Cam Booser allowed two hits and two walks while striking out one in 1 1/3 innings.

Nick Baker (8-1) earned the win. Baker yielded just a walk and struck out one in three scoreless

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innings out of the bullpen.

Diemer, Doe and Navarreto led the Kernels with two hits each. Larson extended his personal-best on-base streak to 13 games.

Cedar Rapids and Kane County underwent a 64-minute rain delay in the middle of the fourth inning.

The Kernels open a three-game series Tuesday night at 6:35 at home against Dayton.

KERNELS (4): Valera, 2b, 5 0 0 0, Gordon, ss, 4 0 0 0, Corcino, cf, 4 1 1 1, Larson, lf, 3 1 0 0, Doe, 3b, 4 1 2 0, Kuresa, 1b, 4 0 1 1, Real, c, 4 1 0 0, Navarreto, dh, 3 4 0 2 1, Miller, pr/dh, 0 0 0 0, Diemer, rf, 4 0 2 0. Totals 35 4 8 4.

KANE COUNTY (5): Vargas, ss, 4 0 1 1, Bray, cf, 4 1 2 1, Herum, 1b, 4 1 3 1, Castillo, 2b, 4 0 1 1, Mack, rf, 2 0 1 0, Gebhardt, dh, 4 0 0 0, Munoz, 3b, 3 1 1 0, Soto, c, 4 1 2 0, Reyes, lf, 3 1 2 1. Totals 32 5 13 5.

Kernels ▯ ▯ ▯ **030 000 010 - 4 8 0**

Kane County ▯ **000 010 40x - 5 13 1**

Westphal, LeBlanc (4), Booser (7) and Real. Keller, Baker (5), Ramirez (8), Curtis (8) and Soto. W - Baker (8-1). L - LeBlanc (7-4). S - Curtis (23). 2B - Navarreto (9), Mack (3), Soto (2), Herum (18). HR - Corcino (3). SB - Mack (1). E - Keller (2). T - 3:48 (1:04 rain delay). A - 6,338.