

## Kernels sweep Peoria for 7th in row

Written by Morgan Hawk

Tuesday, 20 August 2013 22:18 - Last Updated Thursday, 22 August 2013 18:51

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PEORIA, Ill. -- The Cedar Rapids Kernels won their seventh straight game and finished a four-game sweep of the Peoria Chiefs on Tuesday night with an 8-3 victory before 1,164 fans at Dozer Park.

The Kernels (79-46) have won 12 of their last 13 games and stand a season-best 33 games over the .500 mark with 13 games left in the regular season.

Cedar Rapids scored five runs in the third inning and added three more runs in the fourth for the victory. The Kernels held the Chiefs to a total of six runs in the four-game series.

Peoria took its only lead of the series in the second inning with three consecutive two-out hits. Breyvic Valera doubled to deep left with two outs. He scored on Trevor Martin's RBI single to right field, giving the Chiefs a 1-0 lead. Martin advanced to second base on the throw and came home when Ildemaro Vargas bounced an RBI single into center field for a 2-0 edge.

Peoria's lone lead of the series was short-lived as the Kernels tallied five runs right away in the top of the fourth inning, pulling ahead 5-2. Nine men came to the plate in the fourth inning as the Kernels collected three hits and took advantage of two Peoria errors to take the lead for good.

Jeremias Pineda drew a walk and Niko Goodrum reached on a fielding error to put two men on. Max Kepler drilled an RBI double to score Pineda, cutting Peoria's lead to 2-1. Adam Brett Walker followed with a two-run single that scored Goodrum and Kepler, giving the Kernels a 3-2 lead. Walker leads the Midwest League with 106 RBIs.

Mike Gonzales drew a walk and Travis Harrison reached on a throwing error. Walker scored on the error, putting the Kernels up 4-2. Bo Altobelli's RBI single brought Gonzales home and extended the Kernels' lead to 5-2.

The Kernels scored three more runs in their next at-bat to move ahead 8-2. Pineda again jump-started the inning by reaching, this time with a leadoff single. Goodrum singled to put two

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runners on base. Pineda scored on Kepler's second RBI double of the night as the Kernels pushed ahead 6-2.

Gonzales ripped a two-run double off the wall in right field, scoring Goodrum and Kepler to put Cedar Rapids ahead 8-2.

Peoria scored a run in the sixth inning, trimming the Kernels' lead to 8-3. CJ McElroy Jr. singled and scored on Jordan Walton's RBI single.

Tim Atherton (7-4) picked up the win. He started the game and was solid in six innings. He allowed three runs on five hits while striking out four.

The Kernels' bullpen was fantastic, not allowing a runner through the final three innings. Three relievers combined to finish the game as they all recorded one inning.

Brett Lee needed only seven pitches to pick up three groundball outs. Brandon Bixler got a groundout and then struck out two to end the eighth inning. Dallas Gallant struck out the side to finish off the triumph.

Bixler and Gallant combined to strike out five batters in a row to end the contest. Kernels pitchers did not allow a walk.

The Kernels will begin a three-game series at Quad Cities on Wednesday night with lefthander Miguel Sulbaran (6-4, 3.26) on the mound. The Kernels' next home game will be Saturday night against Peoria at 6:35 on fireworks night.

KERNELS (8): Murphy, cf, 5 0 0 0, Goodrum, ss, 5 2 2 0, Kepler, 1b, 5 2 2 2, Walker, rf, 4 1 1 2, Gonzales, dh, 3 1 1 2, Harrison, 3b, 4 0 0 0, Grimes, 2b, 4 0 0 0, Altobelli, c, 4 0 2 1, Pineda, lf, 3 2 1 0. Totals 37 8 9 7.

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PEORIA (3): McElroy, lf, 4 1 1 0, Tilson, cf, 4 0 0 0, Walton, 1b, 4 0 1 1, Schaffer, dh, 4 0 0 0, Martini, rf, 4 0 0 0, Valera, 2b, 3 1 1 0, Martin, 3b, 3 1 1 1, Vargas, ss, 3 0 1 1, Velazco, c, 3 0 0 0. Totals 32 3 5 3.

Kernels 005 300 000 - 8 9 1

Peoria 020 001 000 - 3 5 2

Atherton, Lee (7), Bixler (8), Gallant (9) and Altobelli. Perry, Adamek (4), Sabatino (7), Scanio (8) and Velazco. W - Atherton (7-4). L - Perry (2-2). 2B - Kepler 2 (11), Gonzales (5), Valera (17). SB - Gonzales (1). E - Goodrum (26), Walton (9), Martin (7). T - 2:39. A - 1,164.