

Buxton suffers concussion in collision

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Twins outfielder Byron Buxton, MLB.com's top overall prospect and a 2013 member of the Cedar Rapids Kernels, suffered a concussion Wednesday night in a violent collision in right-center field while making his Double-A debut with New Britain.

Twins executive vice president and general manager Terry Ryan confirmed on the Rock Cats' broadcast that Buxton was diagnosed with a concussion. He said Buxton was unconscious for about 10 minutes following the collision but is "fine" now.

"He's alert," Ryan said after accompanying Buxton to the hospital. "He has a concussion, so we'll have to take the normal procedure and protocol with concussion symptoms. He'll certainly be watched.

"We're grateful for just the concussion. ... I thought it'd be a lot more severe than the results here, because actually they took Byron off, he was knocked out there for about 10 minutes, so that was very scary."

In the fifth inning of his first Eastern League game, Buxton was chasing a line drive to right-center field when he collided with right fielder Mike Kvasnicka. Kvasnicka's knee appeared to hit Buxton around his left shoulder or neck.

The 20-year-old was down for approximately 10 minutes and did not appear to be moving. He was stabilized on a stretcher and taken off in an ambulance that was brought onto the warning track at New Britain Stadium. Kvasnicka was up and walking shortly after the collision, but still went with Buxton to the hospital.

Buxton was released from the hospital and returned to the Rock Cats' clubhouse after the game, New Britain manager Jeff Smith said.

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"With Byron, there wasn't a lot of movement at first," Smith said. "It's scary when something like that happens with the collision and you're just waiting. We're grateful he only has a concussion. And so now, that's what it is, he was able to come back to the clubhouse tonight. He was moving around, alert. We'll have to follow the procedure we have."

According to Ryan, Kvasnicka rejoined the team before the game ended. He has a sore hip but should be fine, the general manager said.

"It has been that type of year," Ryan said. "But he is going to be fine. He is a battler. He's in good spirits right now. It could've been a lot worse."

While play was halted for some 35 minutes, Ryan moved down to the Rock Cats dugout. New Britain players gathered outside their first-base dugout and appeared to have a team prayer before retaking the field.

Smith met with the team outside the dugout before play resumed and appeared to give a short pep talk, but declined to say what he told his players.

Smith and Bowie manager Gary Kendall met with the umpires at home plate after Buxton was taken from the field. Smith said both managers wanted to give their teams ample time to settle before returning to action.

"Just giving both teams a chance to regroup, take as much time as possible," Smith said. "With the hard collision, ambulance on the field, you want to take your time, let them regroup before you go back on the field."

"I'm really proud of our guys to go back out. It was tough. I'm proud of their guys, too, to go out and play baseball. I know both teams, the No. 1 thing on their mind was Byron and Mike. ... To see them okay after the game, we're very grateful."

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