

Hinojosa sparks Kernels to clutch win

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 16 August 2014 21:32 -



Jonatan Hinojosa had to sit on the sidelines for 50 games this season after failing the Minor League drug-testing program, but the infielder from the Dominican Republic is making up for lost time now with the Cedar Rapids Kernels.

Hinojosa lined a two-run triple over the center fielder's head in the bottom of the eighth inning to give the Kernels the go-ahead runs in a clutch 4-2 victory over Peoria before 4,922 fans at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

The victory gave Cedar Rapids a 33-21 record in the Western Division of the Midwest League, just a half-game behind Kane County for first place in the second half of the season.

Hinojosa, 21, tested positive for metabolites of Nandrolone and had to serve a mandatory 50-game suspension.

"That was tough," said Hinojosa. "When I was in offseason, I took some product. And that's bad. When they told me that you (are) suspended 50 games, I was feeling bad."

Hinojosa admitted he used a supplement, but said he did not know it contained a banned substance. "No, I didn't know," he said.

Hinojosa appeared in one game for the Kernels in April, then was suspended. He returned to Cedar Rapids last week and has given the Kernels a big spark as their new leadoff hitter.

He has gone 8-for-18 in four games since returning for a .444 average during that span with

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eight RBIs and five runs scored.

Cedar Rapids Manager Jake Mauer has tried a variety of guys in the leadoff spot this year, but nobody claimed the job on a regular basis. The way things look now, Hinojosa will have the assignment for the rest of the season.

Hinojosa has taken over as the Cedar Rapids third baseman in place of Bryan Haar, who was promoted to Fort Myers last week.



"We've been trying to find somebody to give us a spark," said Mauer. "I know it's a small sample size, but he's been pretty exciting."

Mauer said players need to look for an NSF label on supplements they use to make sure everything in the supplement has been approved.

"That's the biggest thing, you have to look for that label," he said. "He's a young kid, trying to put on weight and get bigger and stronger."

Hinojosa, who is listed at 150 pounds, had plenty of muscle on his two-run triple in the eighth inning. The Peoria center fielder was playing fairly shallow with runners on first and third and one out for a possible play at the plate on a fly ball, but Hinojosa burned him.

"Yeah, I knew that ball was over the center fielder," he said. "And I run to third base really fast."

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Logan Wade and Ryan Walker scored on the play, erasing a 2-1 deficit and giving the Kernels their 3-2 lead. Hinojosa scored on a line single to center by Engelb Vielma to make it 4-2.

Jake Reed, one of the stars of a strong bullpen for Cedar Rapids, struck out the side in the top of the ninth inning to end the game. Reed (3-0, 0.47 ERA) also had a 1-2-3 inning in the eighth and picked up the victory.

Reed has not allowed an earned run in his last 16 2/3 innings, the longest scoreless stretch for the Kernels this season. He has struck out 26 batters in 19 innings overall, with only eight hits and two walks.

"He's been lights-out," said Mauer. "Reed's been outstanding."

The Kernels and Peoria meet again Sunday at 2:05 p.m. The Kernels own a six-game lead over Peoria for a playoff spot with 16 games left in the regular season.

PEORIA (2): Bryan, cf, 4 0 0 0, Pedroza, 2b, 4 1 1 0, Herrera, ss, 4 0 0 0, Kelly, c, 4 1 1 0, Ringo, 1b, 4 0 2 2, Castillo, lf, 4 0 0 0, Wick, rf, 2 0 1 0, Medina, dh, 2 0 0 0, Schulze, ph/dh, 0 0 0 0, Valera, 3b, 2 0 1 0. Totals 30 2 6 2.

CEDAR RAPIDS (4): Hinojosa, 3b, 4 1 2 3, Vielma, ss, 3 0 1 1, Christensen, 1b, 4 0 1 0, Garver, c, 2 0 1 0, Swim, rf, 4 0 1 0, Murphy, cf, 3 0 1 0, Williams, lf, 3 0 0 0, Wade, dh, 2 1 0 0, Walker, 2b, 3 2 2 0. Totals 28 4 8 4.

Peoria 000 101 000 - 2 6 0

Kernels 001 000 03x - 4 9 0

Ar.Reyes, Bray (7), Barraclough (8) and Kelly. Thorpe, Mazza (6), Reed (8) and Garver. W - Reed (3-0). L - Bray (0-1). 2B - Kelly (16), Pedroza (9), Ringo (11), Walker (8). 3B - Hinojosa (2). SB - Vielma (9), Christensen (28). T - 2:46. A - 4,922.

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